

APRIL 1917

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE



**"A
Son
Of
Kazan"**
*by James
Oliver Curwood*

"The Bird in the Bush"

**"We
Can't
Have
Everything"**
by

RUPERT HUGHES

by Eugene Manlove Rhodes



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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsmen after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

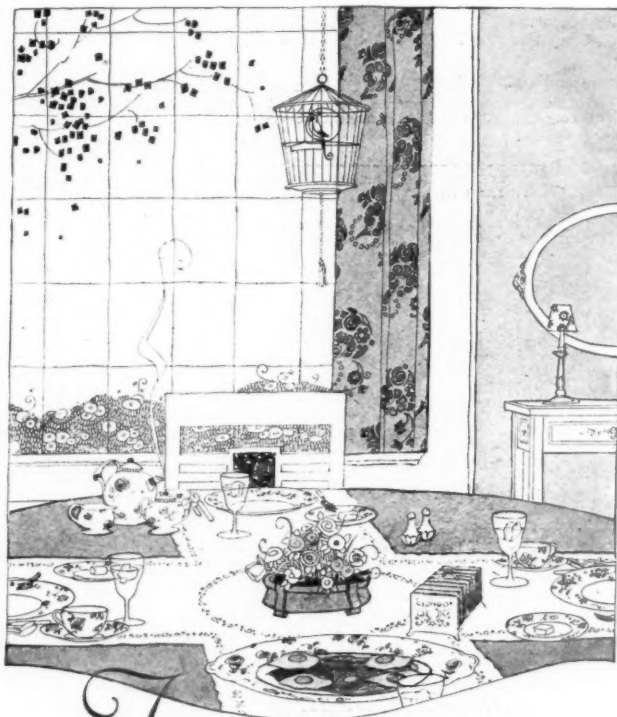
ADVERTISING FORMS close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publisher, North American Building, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President

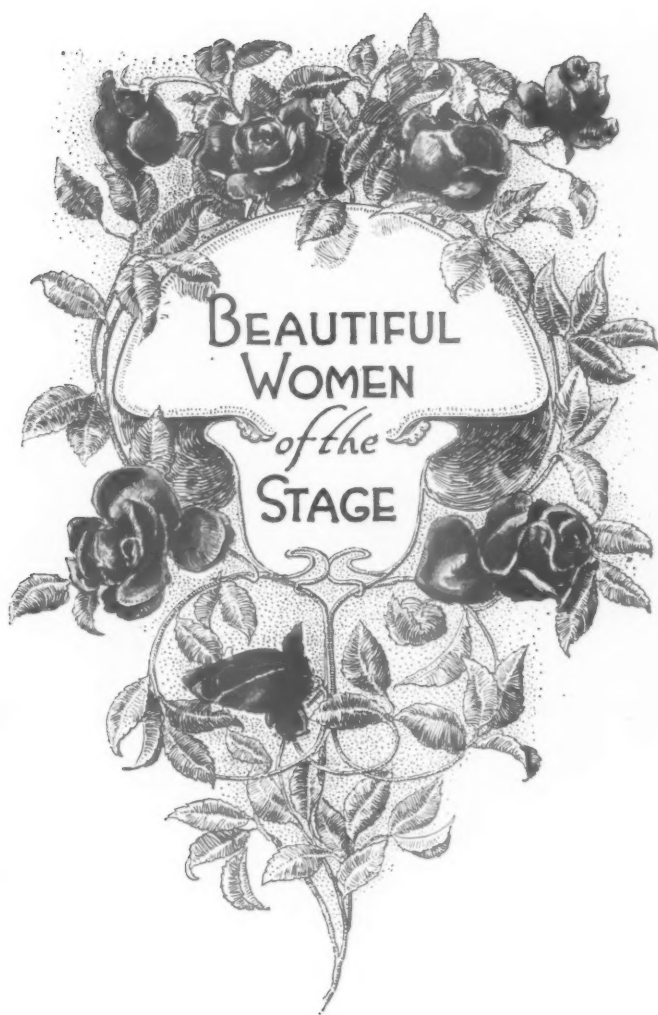
CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

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R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston. LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
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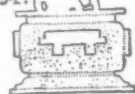


GRACE DARLING
Film Play Star

Photograph by Campbell Studio, N. Y.



GAIL KANE
Film Play Star
Photograph by Campbell Studio, N. Y.









DOLLY HACKETT
in "The Century Girl"
Photograph by White, N. Y.

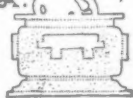




EDITH HALLOR
in "The Century Girl"
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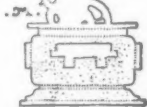
HAZEL LEWIS
in "The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic."
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JOEN BUTLIN
in "The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic."
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April
1917

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXVIII
No. 6

RAY LONG, Editor



A new story of that unique
character, Aforesaid
Andrew Jackson Bates

By Eugene
Manlove Rhodes

The Bird in the Bush

I LIKED the
Big Sandy,
and I liked
the people.

But I saw what was coming. Good rains—high grass—double your herds every washday—everything lovely! Then along comes old Mr. Drought. *Bing!* There you are, busted. It's like playing double or quits; if you don't pinch your bets, you're going home talking to yourself. It's got to be that way. So I sold out.

Then I went off alone and tried to establish communication with myself. "Look here, Andy," says I, "are you going to be a dern fool all your whole life? You're getting old, and you're getting bald, and those that know you best, they love you most—but they put up quarantine signs against you. It's time to quit your wild, fool ways and settle down.

"But, still, yet," I rejoins, "you can't never be satisfied in town, planted in rows, or packed in cans or stacked on shelves. And you'll never be anything more than a bald-headed boy so long as you stay on the free range. With that rep' you got, people wouldn't let you

behave if you wanted to. Your poor old dad tried to hammer some farmin' into your head," says I. "Why not try that?"

"But, again, then," says I, "you got to jar loose from the cow-business gradual. A little bunch of bossies fenced safe from the depredations of unprin-

cipled men—that's what you want, to tide you over till you get the hang of farming."

Good scheme, wasn't it? I thought so. I'd held onto some of my wisest cowponies. So now I picked out two and sold the rest. Deacon was experienced and observing and level-headed; Quaker didn't have near such good judgment, but he was Deacon's pardner. I fixed me up a pack, and we went projecting off, still-huntin' a home for our declining years.

We skipped Prescott. Prescott had forgiven me, all right, allowing I was as much sinned against as sinning; but they was likewise strong of the opinion that if I ever came back, they'd sin against me some more. They was mighty explicit about that.

ILLUSTRATED BY
HARVEY DUNN



HER face was kind of smily and teary and cheery all at once, and part mischievous, and kind of poutish too. "I know you only want what's best for me," she threw back over her shoulder, "and that's why. I know you don't really truly like me—that way," she says. "If you did, you wouldn't know you was old or unlucky or anything—and you'd be insisting on havin' your own way, whether 'twas best for me or not!"

We shunned Tonto Basin too, where cattle- and sheep-men was enjoyin' a war. I wasn't in any hurry. I reckon we put in three or four months on that search. But I hadn't found nothing quite to fit me.

I'd been climbing uphill two or three days,—hadn't seen a man since I left Salt River, and mighty few sheep-herders,—just a steady up, up, up, through a crooked, winding, wavy, hazy, cold, blue-black piny-woods country, and at last I came out on the big top. Oh, man!

THE mountain dropped off in fifteen minutes all I'd climbed up in three days. Right under me was

a mesa of low, red foothills; then came a great, round, gray-greenish-yellow basin, thirty or fifty miles across any which way, saucer-shaped, heaped high with sunshine.

There was big mountains all around it; where I sat, on the south, they made a level black wall with one gate-way off to my

left. The eastern curve was piny-black too, broken hills, round, rolling and low. Across in the southwest, maybe forty mile away, was a stretch of bare gray cliffs, straight upandicular, ending in a limestone elephant with one eye and a granite trunk six miles long. He looked mighty curious. He kept that one eye on me, and I felt little cold shivers playing up and down my backbone.

Running catawampus across the basin, like a crack in the saucer, was a cañon. It headed in a gap in the northeast and slipped off to the Pacific through a fold in the cliffs this side of that elephant. He had a mean eye.

It was wide and deep and crooked, that cañon. My side of the basin was wavy; north of the cañon-crack it rose in benches; and 'way beyond and above

the last bench was a half-circle of misty, pinky granite knobs and spikes and spires, notched and jagged, domes and turrets and things. They took my eye. Seems like the nicest places to live are where you find that worn-down granite for soil. It's so clean and cheerful.

Down under us I saw a big white road striking across to the front gate at my left. Only for the road, I'd 'a' thought I was the first man on the job.

I'd been pursuing around at random, and there wasn't rightly any way to get down from where I was. But we made it sliding, somehow. It took us half a day. Down in the red feethills we found mines and things, all nailed up and abandoned. We found a little spring and made camp.

Soon in the morning we was out on the plain. Prettiest rolling mesa you ever see—black grama and crowfoot; plenty slick fat cattle, mostly branded J. B.; antelope, and too many bands of wild horses. Presently we hit an old wagon-track, rutted deep but grown up with grass. More old roads comes anglin' in, and at last we come to the big white road I'd seen from the summit.

It had been traveled a heap once, but not lately. It was ruler-straight across the mesa, till we pitched off into the breaks of a draw that led down to the main big cañon, getting deeper and deeper. Directly we come to the jump-off place, and the wagon-road took to the side-hill. It was dug out two or three thousand years ago and hadn't been repaired since—ribbed and gullied—rubble, with the soil all washed away. We twisted down and down and down some more, till at last we come out on the cañon-floor to orchards and ditches and a white town asleep in the sun.

Yessir! Every man I see was asleep, under the trees or on the porches; and they was all old, old men. I followed along between vineyards and open doors and alfalfa and cottonwood trees to a shady plaza with a 'cequia tinklin' down beside, mighty pleasant. I let the horses drink. There was a 'dobe store squandering around under the oldest cottonwood in the world, and in front sets an old jasper with a long, gray beard, sound asleep. I woke him up.

"Good evening," says I. "Can you tell me where I can find *Allan Quatermain*?"

He didn't get me. He wasn't literary. "Never heard of him," says he.

I HEARD some one laugh behind me.

It was a cool, ripply little laugh, tuned to a little waterfall in the 'cequia. I looked around and saw a girl in a streak of dancing sun that smuggled through the branches.

"S-sh! *Allan Quatermain* escaped—three years ago—across the mountain—and the forest—and the desert—toward Zanzibar! Hush-sh!" She put her finger to her lip and tiptoed across to me. She gave the old geezer a side-look and held her hand up, palm out. "S-sh!" she says again. . . .

Sometimes I dream of going back. I ride along dim old roads that never were, to old houses that couldn't be—great, ramshackle old barracks, doors open and sagging, shutters that swing and squeak over broken windows—dim and dark inside, old moldy pictures on the wall, dust on tables and chairs and drifted in the fireplace. And I can't remember—quite. So I follow the old road, windin' and windin' through a level, brushy country. There's no tracks turning off, but the road gets dimmer and dimmer, and at last it plays out. So I go on and on to look for ranches I can almost remember, and a little swift river that ought to be somewhere: but the mountains are wrong, and all the gaps are in the wrong places, and everything is changed—except Minnie. She is just the same; she isn't any older; her eyes are sunny; she comes dancing and laughing to meet me through a deep shade. And—this is curious—she brings the sunlight with her, always the warm, clear sunshine rippling about her as she comes. I wasn't expecting her: I try to tell her so—and then I wake up.

I hopped down as she came—the really time, I mean, not the dream. Deacon stretched out his nose, and she pets him. "It is the custom of the valley," she says, "for strangers from the outside world to stay at the—at the palace—until their fate is decided."

She was just a little trick. There was

a dimple in her cheek that come and went as she spoke; her eyes were brown, and down in each one lived a little, merry, dancing gold devil—you could see him when she laughed at you. Quaker come up alongside and crowded old Deacon off—he wanted to be petted too. So I pushed his head away, just like he done to Deacon—and then she laughed again. "Got to keep pack-horses in their places," says I.

"They want their dinner," said the girl. "So do you. Come along."

"That's right," said the old geezer, settlin' back for another snooze. "Cowmen, they all stop with her dad—he owns the J. B. You go along with her."

SO we walked on down the street; the *cequia* sung along beside us, Deacon and Quaker looking around, mighty interested, sizing things up.

"Who, which, why, when, where, what, how?" says I. "Where am I? Why is everyone asleep? And why are the mines closed down? Why doesn't no one ever travel the roads? Why hasn't no one ever heard of this place before? Why did the elephant try to scare me back? Why everything?"

So she told me why. "We're waiting for the railroad. It's our sole occupation. That's the answer to all the questions. And now it's your turn, isn't it? Who, where, how? Explain! No wanderer has found his way here since—"

"*Allan Quatermain!*" says I. "For me, Miss—why, I guess I couldn't have stayed away if I'd tried. It was predestined and foreordained that I was comin' here—to wait for the railroad."

"Here's the J. B. house," she said. "Father isn't at home, but Anselmo will show you where to put your horses." She give both of 'em a little pat. "Then come on in. Mother and I will have dinner ready for you."

I turned the horses to an alfalfa stack and went in. Mrs. Briscoe was a nice, motherly old lady, but she acted kinder worn-out and road-weary. After I met old man Briscoe, I knew why. He was a mean old whelp—just naturally cussed. The house was fixed up nice.

That evenin' Minnie sat out on the gallery with me, explainin'. The basin

was called the Butterbowl—'member the Butterbowl on Rainbow? I named that myself, after this place. The river was San Lucas; the big range I'd crossed was Black Mountain, and my nice pinky hills was Dream Mountain.

In and around Butterbowl was everything a man could want—grass, lumberwoods, mines, water and soil to grow anything: but it took three days' hard riding in any direction to reach a given point. The early settlers saw that a railroad was bound to tap this country—some time. So they made 'em a town, Central, built them wagon-roads out to the tributary mines and lumber, built orchards and ditches and set down to wait for the whistle. Meantime they raised cattle.

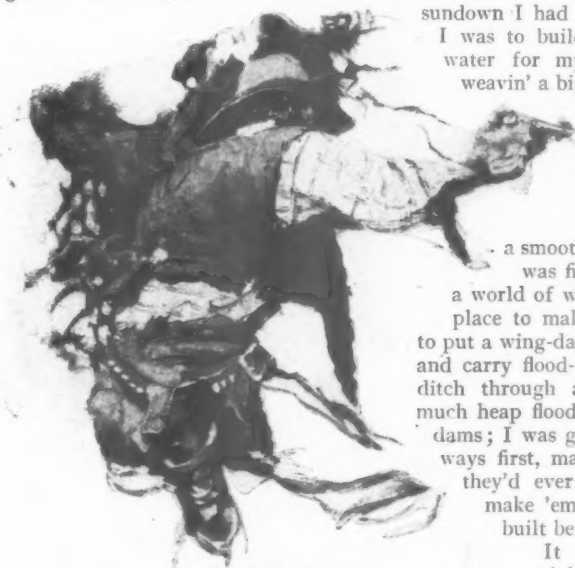
There was one big cattle-company, the J. B., and a lot of little outfits beside. Leastwise, they called it a company, though Minnie's dad, he owned most of it. They hadn't overstocked yet, but they was fixin' to; they hadn't got to stealin' much yet, but they was practicing; and old J. Briscoe allowed the little cowmen was all worthless and not fit company for his daughter: so they had all the makin's of trouble. I thought I'd stay.

IN the morning I struck out for my pinky mountains. One of them nice little Southwest spring winds, like we got here, was beating in my face, mighty raw. Once I climbed the mesa, I quit the road and sidled off, so's to split the difference between the one-eyed elephant and the stage-road gap, Holbrook way. I was needin' a place where I wouldn't be in nobody's way, d'yuh see—an' likewise, where nobody'd be in my way. I passed all the cattle, and I passed all the cattle-tracks; I got up on the last bench, level as a billiard-table, right under them pinky mountains: I put in between two of them backbones and run spang onto exactly what I wanted.

I heard the wind ravin' and howlin' up overhead, but in between them two spurs of hill it was still as a Monday meetin'-house. After facing that wind all day, it seemed like a box-seat in Paradise, complimentary. I named it Shelter, right off.

I guess Adam had the best time anybody ever did, namin' things. Ever notice what good names you find in a thin-settled country? That's 'cause they didn't have no prominent citizens to call things after.

There was a narrow box between the hills for about a quarter, and a big gravel wash. Then we come out in a



SQUATTY come directly. He was real surprised at not finding no yearling, and he said so. When he got down to get his rope, I cut loose a few shots, puffin' up dust between him and his horse.

wide, open valley with a big granite fence about two thousand foot high all around it, and I knowed Andrew Jackson Bates had found him a home.

Come to find out afterward, the Butterbowl folks called the place Bottle Basin. That was the shape of it, maybe five mile across from rim-rock to rim-rock, and about six the long way. There was crowfoot, black grama and short, curly, yellow buffalo-grass, and mesquite beans; plenty cedar, juniper and live-oak on the ridges. Put a little fence across the mouth of the bottle, and there

I was, snug, my cows fenced in and other people's fenced out. I made camp and went a-prospectin'.

There wasn't any living water, as I knowed before, by there being no fresh cow-tracks, but I could see by the wash that a heap of water come down the draw when it rained. My play was to build tanks and store flood-water—see? By sundown I had it all figured out. Here I was to build a little tank, to hold water for my teams, whilst I was weavin' a big one. Both was to be in

a smooth side-draw, where there was first a wide place to hold a world of water, and then a narrow place to make a dam. I was going to put a wing-dam in on the main cañon, and carry flood-water to my tanks in a ditch through a little saddle—so too much heap flood would never break my dams; I was going to make my waste-ways first, make 'em twice as big as they'd ever need to be, and then make 'em bigger. I'd seen dams built before.

It was full moon, that night. I prowled around, a-plannin', proud as a pawn in the king-row. I reckon that was about the happiest one time

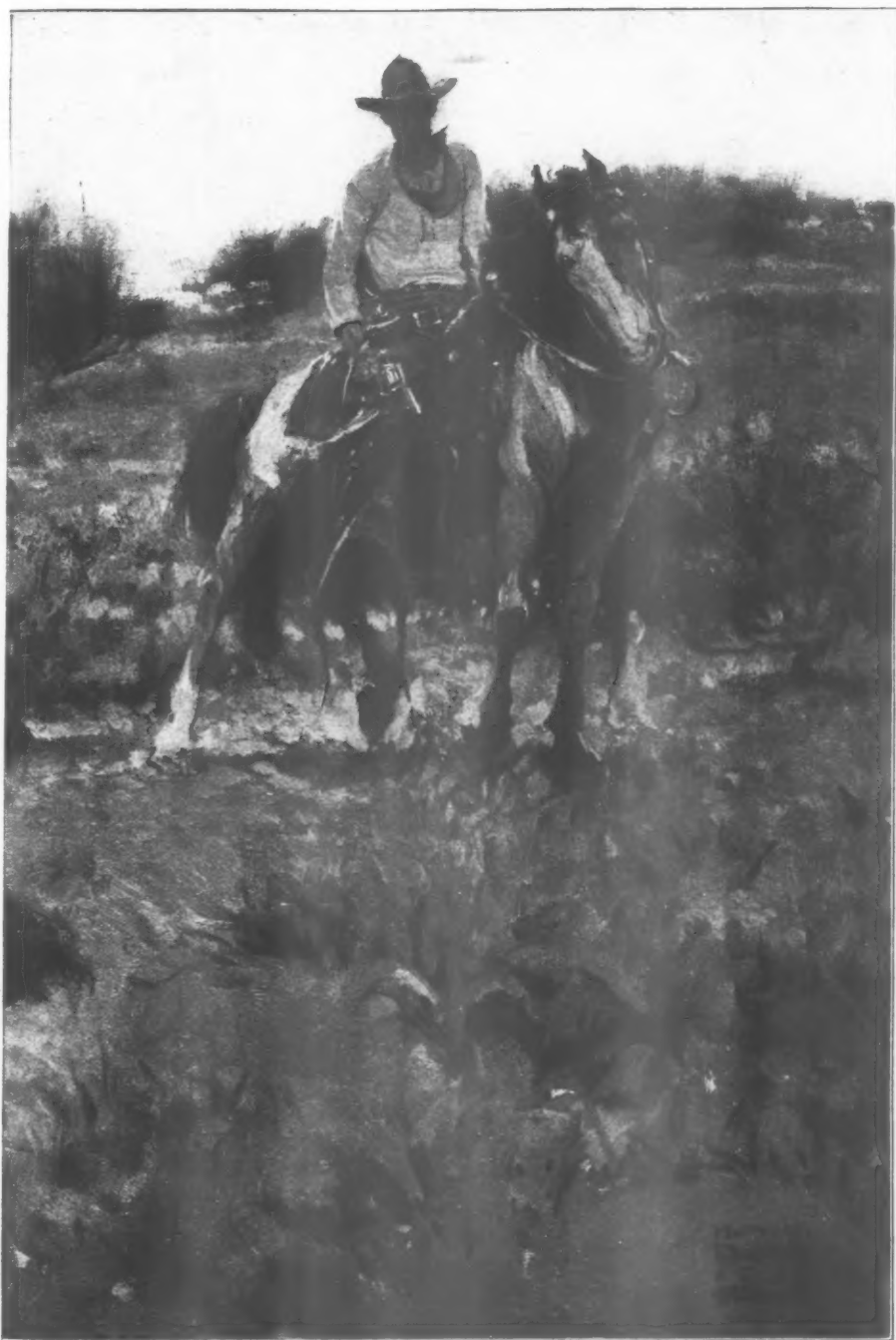
I ever put in. "Andrew Jackson, I sure made a stake to-morrow," says I. Here I was

to build my big dam, and here my spill-way; here was to be my corrals, and here my orchard; I began farmin' by breaking in a little flat and edged a little further down every year.

NEXT day we ambled around looking for water. I followed the dim cow-trails till they got plain, and the plain ones till they got dusty, and we struck a spring, fifteen mile away, where a fellow named Hall held out—give the Bow-and-Arrow brand. Come dinner, I found this was the nearest place for me



I looked at Petey a spell, and Petey looked at me. After a bit things steadied down some, and I remembers my man-outpour. I felt considerable nettled. It didn't seem to me that Petey was showin' the makes you think it's interesting to me? If you've fully made



ners. "Thank you!" says I. "Oh, I *will* be damned!" whispers Petey again, as if his soul in them few words he would proper sort of spirit. "Doubtless," says I. "But why so confidential about it? And what up your mind, all right—but I don't care, I'll tell you those!"

to haul water from to begin my work. Of course, I didn't tip my hand. Cowmen sure hate to be crowded.

That night I cached my pack and hiked to Holbrook for a surveyor. He ran out my section numbers for me, and made me plots and plans and estimates and specifications. I didn't want 'em: I built my dam by guess and by golly when I got at it; but the laws calls for 'em.

Then I wandered over and broke the news gently to old man Hall and asked him could I borrow some water to haul over to Shelter. He fought his head right smart at first, till he found out what my name was. Then he come to his feed. He'd heard of me. And he judged I'd come in handy to hold the J. B. outfit level. So I got him and his boy Bill to slip down to Globe with me as witnesses when I filed on my claim.

I got a wagon in Globe, a darky named Eph and a span of mules, a Mex boy and a span of big horses, a plow and two scrapers, water-barrels, tools and a tent and such. We took rounders on the Butterbowl and pussy-footed into Shelter unbeknownst.

Hall drawed me over a first load of water on his wagon, for a starter. I set Eph and Estebán to tanking while I broke Deacon and Quaker to the water-wagon. They was dead set against it. It was some comedown from bein' crack cow-horses. I reckon they thought I'd put 'em on the scraper next.

I see they wasn't going to be satisfied, and we hadn't brought much corn up from Globe; so after a few trips I put off down to Central. They was bound to find out about me and Shelter before long, anyway. I dickered for a span of spankin' black mares, Zip and Jezebel, and carried out a load of corn and supplies, with Deacon and Quaker at the tail-gate. They was sure tickled. I knew some one would be curious about me. And sure enough, the next day but one, here comes old John Briscoe, just a-snuffin'. I hadn't never seen him before, but I knowed him right off. He looked like a cartoon of himself.

"What's this? What's all this? What you doing here?" he sizzles.

"Just now I'm a-prizing long, wide,

hard, heavy, thick, big rocks out o' my spillway with a crowbar," says I. "And directly I'm going to compound the finest dinner you ever flopped your lip over. Get down and look at your saddle a spell."

"Of all the gall!" says J. B. "We'll fix *your* clock! You'll be glad to get out o' here, quicker than you came—crowdin' yourself in where you aint wanted. If you're hunting trouble, you've come to the right shop. You'll get it, and you'll get it good!"

Wasn't that a nice crack to make? That's what a man gets himself by going where he's not known.

"Did you ever chance to hear the honored name of Aforesaid Andrew Jackson Bates?" I asked him.

"The pleasure is mine," he says, mighty sneerin'. "I have not. Desperado, I reckon?"

"Worse than that," says I. "A heap worse. I'm a stayer. I've got a positive genius for bad luck—witness them opprobrious syllables, Aforesaid, wished onto me by acclamation of five States and Territories. Fair sir," says I, "you was mentionin' trouble to me. I've had all the kinds of trouble a mere single man can have, and most generally got the worst of it; but let me tell you, beloved, none of my victorious and laurel-wreathed antagonists has ever bragged about it any, and that includes the sovereign State of California, the Republic of Mexico, the Espee Railroad, the Diamond-A Cattle Company, Yavapai County, Prescott, Buckey O'Neil and the Arizona House of Reprobates, besides Montana and some few other commonwealths whose memory is now fadin' in the mists that rise down the River of Time. So far, I've had no mix-up with the United States or the Daughters of the Revolution," says I, "but outside o' that, I've met everything in the shape of man or beast that the umpire could furnish and have never yet lowered my arm."

"Trouble?" says I. "Trouble? Before you come talking trouble to me, you'd better read the history of your country. Pending them investigations," says I, "don't you try to run any blazers on me, and likewise smooth your

wrinkled front. You may not know it, but you're allowin' yourself to make horrid frowns at me, and I wont have it. I like smilin' faces and cheerful words and happy laughter around me, and I'm goin' to have 'em. I came here seekin' a quiet and peaceful spot to while away the Indian summer of my soul, and if you pester me any, I'm going to do you a great personal injury, forthwith, at once, *ahorita, inmediatamente* and now! Declare yourself, Marmaduke Mortimer—a gold chain or a wooden leg?"

J. B. was some impressed by them remarks. He come back at me easy. "But it wouldn't be right for you to turn no cattle loose on this range," says he. "You aint got no water-right. And you can't get no water by digging—not around here. I've drilled a well five hundred foot, right here in Bottle Basin."

"Shelter," I corrects him.

HE went right on! "And this mizzable little tank you're making wont have a drop of water in it three months after the rains. You can't—I mean, it wouldn't be the square thing to turn a herd in the Butterbowl on the strength of that."

"The audience will kindly retain their rompers," says I. "I aint goin' to turn any cattle loose on your range. This is only my family cistern, to water my horses whilst we collaborate on a big he-tank. I'm goin' to make the desert do that blossom thing; I'm goin' to be a bold yeomanry, my country's pride, and sit under my own vine and fig-tree. I'm going to raise Early Martyr potatoes; I'm going to walk abroad and view the fields where oats, peas, beans and barley grows. You cast your eagle eye down the hollow betwixt them two hills," says I. "Right there, in about ten months or two years, I'm goin' to have me a tame ten-acre lake."

"Huh! There aint watershed enough, in this little draw," says he.

"Goin' to tap the main draw and lead it through yonder little saddle," I explains to him.

He looks kinder interested. "Why—I believe that would work," says he. "But if you want to farm, why don't you buy a place down on the San Lucas?"

"Me? Shucks, I never could see any

good times herdin' with them sleep-walkin' nesters," says I. "Dern a granger, anyhow!"

"Why—why—why, you're going to be one yourself!" says Briscoe.

He had me there. I hadn't thought o' that. It struck me all in a heap.

"Well, not so's you can notice it. I may irritate the soil a little, as a gentlemanly relaxation—but do I look anyways like a splay-footed, sod-hopping, apple-grafting granger? I'm as good a cow-man as ever throwed a loop by moonlight," says I.

"But you said you wouldn't turn no cattle loose on my range," said Briscoe, stuttering.

"Aint it the truth?" says I. "What's the matter with my range—*m—y, my?* Throw a little fence across that cañon, like a stopper in a bottle—"

I didn't finish, 'cause Briscoe, he was carryin' on something fierce. He was a natural-born hawg, that man was.

I let him rave a spell, till I see I might as well stop him first as last. "See here, Aloysius," says I, "you're talking pretty brash. I wonder at myself that I aint bent this crowbar over your old hard head."

He reined his horse around. "Where you goin'?" says I, and I grabbed up a rock. "I'm a patient man," says I, "but if you don't light off that cayuse and stay to dinner, I'm goin' to bounce a pebble off your medulla obligato. It isn't anyways neighborly to go off that way just as dinner's ready; it casts reflections on my cookin'. Welcome, little stranger!" I says, as he climbs off. "Welcome to Shelter!"

I tried to rib him up with a jolly whilst I was wrangling chuck. "I know what makes your sorrows grieve you so, Montmorency," says I. "You tot it up that because I've got a pasture I'm goin' to get implicated with your calves. I been all along that road, same as you have—we wont deny it, Epaminondas; but I wouldn't choose any more of the pie. Honesty is the best policy, as who should know better than me? You and the J. B. punchers is welcome to prowl around in here, auditing, any time, and there'll always be a meal's victuals for you and a nice level place to sleep."



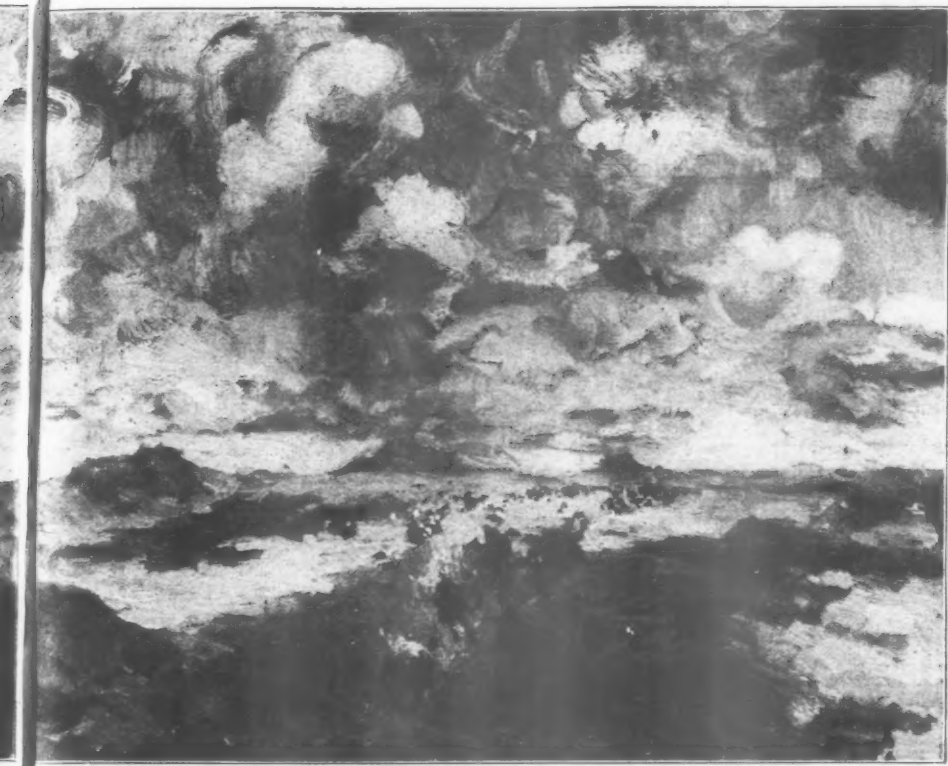
We let the boys gain on us, to encourage them—that is, I did. Petey, he was in favor of going on, but I held him back.

But he wouldn't mellow up and he went away dissatisfied. That old man never did like me.

NEXT time I went to town, old J. B. had me over to the house and offered me five hundred to quit-claim Shelter to him. Seems like he'd set his heart on it, and he couldn't forgive me for him not thinkin' of buildin' a tank there first. That night I met Minnie's cousin Jane, who was the Central school-ma'am, and old man Duffy, Methodist preacher from St. Johns, and Dee Macfarlane. Dee had sunny hair, the rascal—wavy and sunny. He owned a nice little bunch of cattle, but he didn't 'tend to his business very close, I thought. He was settin' around up to Minnie's nearly every time I went near there. That's no way to run cattle. You got to be out amongst 'em.

Well, there come an early rain that year, along in April. That filled my cistern so I got shut of water-hauling. So long as I had a township for pasture, ready-made all but the gate, I thought we'd better fix the gate. So we strung up the wire fence across the box. After that we could turn our work-horses loose at night, instead of hobbling, and they done better. I got another scraper down to Central, and another Mexican—Eusebio. He wasn't much force, not sized up with Eph and Estebán. He had a Candelaria girl in Central. Candy, she worked for Mamma Briscoe. I didn't mind him going down Sundays so much, though he was lonesome to ride with—but he did sing such long-drawn and mournful despair around the camp-fire after supper:

*Tal vez, mi amada, en brazos de otro amor,
Duermes y descansas—ay! sin pensar en mí!*



"I never knowed how popular I was," said I. "Them boys are sure aimin' to avenge the deep damnation of my taking-off."

We began makin' dirt fly on this new dam. Beat all, what a difference it made not havin' to drag water fifteen mile for six horses and a camp. I tied up Deacon or Quaker, turn about, for night-horse. Every morning I was out wranglin' work-stock before day, while the boys rustled breakfast. I did the rest o' the cookin' and all the pot-walloping and blacksmithing. I hauled corn and chuck, and kep' camp in venison, and rustled wood: I jumped in to hold the plow or whatever was needed quick and most, and we inched right along. I hadn't never worked so steady since I was a boy on Staten Island. The plowed dirt smelled good, and the green grass it smelled good, and the chuck tasted good. I felt virtuouser and virtuouser every day. I'd put away childish things: I looked back with pain to them ranikiboo plays I'd hitherto promulgated.

The neighbors took to droppin' in to see me. Nice lot of two-handed punchers, they was—Hall and Billy Hall, Spike and Doc and Squatty Robinson and San Simon—he was a prospector, San Simon was.

J. Briscoe, he mostly flocked by his only, but he come out twice more, raising his offer to fifteen hundred. He sure wanted the Shelter place. Joe Only, the J. B. wagon boss, he happened in pretty frequent, and Chuck Barefoot.

For I began to have other company too. Minnie Briscoe and her cousin Jane, they took to comin' out Saturday nights and staying over Sunday. I got a new tent for 'em, soon as I see they was formin' the habit. I'd go deer-hunting with Minnie at first—or just go browsing around with both of 'em. Jane was an easy keeper, but she wasn't ex-

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KEEP your eye on the stories of this man Royal Brown. He's a "comer." For the light, gracefully told type of story, his style is refreshing and new.

Eve promised that she wouldn't wait up for him, but she was curled up in a chair in the living-room when he arrived home, just before midnight.

ILLUSTRATED
BY OSCAR
FREDERICK
HOWARD



The Very Last Time

By Royal Brown

EVE WARE was endowed with a great many engaging qualities; Stuart Ware, who had adventured into matrimony with her, believed that compared to the ordinary woman she was one of those who keep the average high. Having loved, honored and obeyed her for three years, he was sure he knew her beyond the possibility of surprise.

Eve, he realized, might envy the Sinnotts, if she were like some women. The Sinnotts were neighbors, older than Stuart and Eve, and childless, although their red-gabled, stucco-finished home was big enough to domicile an orphan-asylum. They took what Stuart interpreted as a kindly interest in Eve and himself, playing the part of fairy god-parents and whisking them off to such diversions as dinner and the opera, not in a coach achieved out of a pumpkin, but in a spang-new limousine achieved out of commissions. Eleven thousand dollars was what the limousine cost—

Who wrote "Mary Does Something for Herself" and "The Farewell Kiss."

"set him back" was the phrase Gregory Sinnott used. Sinnott, who was stout, sleek and successful, added that he called it the War Baby, explaining for the benefit of Eve that this was because war-stocks had paid for it. Whereupon Eve laughed. Then:

"Thanks for a delightful time. Good night, Mrs. Sinnott."

"Much obliged, old man"—this from Stuart to Sinnott, of course.

The chauffeur, a little red-haired cockney, did things with his hands and feet. The Sinnotts, waving graciously, glided smoothly away. The Wares turned and walked up the box-hedged gravel path (which was to be asphalted sometime in the dim, golden future) to

their house—which cost about half as much as the War Baby and was mortgaged to boot.

"Riding in that," said Eve with characteristic intensity and a quick nod in the direction of the departing car, "makes me feel like a well-fed cat sitting on a cushion."

Stuart laughed. He was neither stout, sleek nor particularly successful. But then, he was only twenty-nine.

"And being dropped here makes you feel like a well-fed cat that has been pushed off the cushion onto the floor. I suppose," he said.

This was mere badinage, said only to be contradicted.

"Rather!"

Eve used undue emphasis. Stuart glanced at her, surprised and, in a way he did not stop to analyze, hurt. The front door, however, created a diversion. He struggled to get the key into the lock and succeeding at length, followed his wife in and switched on the library lights.

Eve was slipping off her black fox furs. She was slender and had a quick, childlike grace of movement. Stuart, as he helped remove her coat, cast an approving eye over her. Conscious of his gaze, she raised her small, serious face to his. She wore her wavy, dark hair parted and brushed back from the forehead. There were times, Stuart thought, when she looked like a little girl masquerading as a woman.

"You look very sweet to-night," he said.

Stuart knew that Eve was almost pathetically pleased with any word of appreciation. But this time she did not react. A shadow fell on her face as she said:

"Oh, Stuart, how could I? I felt just shabby beside Mrs. Sinnott."

"Eve!"

She flushed. But:

"I'd like to go just once in a dress that was absolutely all right and as nice as anybody's," she said with defiant wistfulness.

"But you look as nice as anyone."

"You don't understand, Stuart. You think because I don't look plain shabby, it's all right. I'd like to look well enough

to attract attention for once. There is an intoxication in a new dress."

Stuart started to speak and changed his mind. He was distinctly hurt now. He admitted it with a little gasp. A sudden suspicion that Eve was envious goaded him to break the silence.

"If you wanted all these things, you should have married a more successful man, like Sinnott."

Eve turned toward him, eyes at once startled and indignant.

"Stuart, you are unfair," she cried, and gathering up her furs, sped upstairs like a whirlwind.

"Now the fat is in the fire," reflected Stuart; "and I'll be hanged if I know just how it got there."

Everything had been lovely only a few minutes before. Now everything was all wrong. And in some way he was held to be to blame. He always was. He gazed with moody, unseeing eyes at the mantel clock. He felt ill-used and indignant, and his feelings were reflected in his boyish countenance, which Eve told him at times, consolingly, was "a nice face, even if it wasn't handsome."

Eve's quick footsteps ceased overhead, and he knew, with the sophistication of the married man, that she had seated herself before her dressing-table and was braiding her hair for the night. So he darkened the living-room and began his nightly round. Vengefully he glared into the furnace; bitterly he put fresh coal on the kitchen range; sadly he attended to the windows; fearfully he ascended the stairs to their bedroom.

Eve was in bed. He undressed in a silence as sonorous and as nerve-racking as the bedlam of a machine-shop. Just before he switched off the light, he bent over and kissed her. Her lips were stiff and unresponsive; the bedclothes shook a little. Stuart realized, with a qualm, that she was feeling very badly. For a moment he wavered. Then he hardened himself with the thought that so was he. But it was long before he fell asleep.

THE next morning he awoke with the leaden sense of something amiss that is the inevitable aftermath of a domestic crisis still unadjusted. Eve and he sel-

dom quarreled outright, but there were days when the impalpable wall of an unsettled issue reared itself between them. Stuart dreaded such times.

He glanced at Eve. She was already awake, and she flashed her usual morning smile at him. The leaden sense of something amiss dropped away; his spirits soared.

"Eve dear!"

"Yes?"

"I'm going to get you a dress—a bully good dress."

"Oh, Stuart!" Her arms went around his neck; she drew him to her passionately. "I don't care. Really, I don't. I just wanted *you* to care, and to say you were sorry that my dress wasn't as nice, or to say I looked just as sweet to you anyway. Besides, we can't afford it."

"I don't need a new overcoat. You can take—"

"No, I won't. You need an overcoat, and I sha'n't hear any more such nonsense. It was that limousine, Stuart. It *does* make me feel like a well-fed cat—and act like one. There ought to be a law against them. I really believe they exist chiefly to make other people envious."

Stuart laughed.

"You don't believe, then, that there is any real joy in owning one and riding about in it, apart from the joy of making other people envious?"

"Yes, there is," she admitted. "But"—vengefully—"if I were a poor man without enough money to buy my wife a warm coat for the winter, and I saw one of those go rolling by, I think I'd turn anarchist on the spot."

"I know how you feel, Toots. There have been times when I've felt that an opulent old gentleman in a thousand-dollar fur overcoat put altogether too much faith in the police. But there is one thing certain. I'm going to get you a dress. I'll get it, even if I have to hold up a bank president or rob a till."

"Silly!" Eve kissed him, nevertheless. "Too bad rising young barristers can't do such things," she added.

"NO," said Eve decidedly as she manipulated the electric toaster at the breakfast-table. "I sha'n't hear of such a

thing. You work quite hard enough in the office as it is."

"But this will be a change. A little newspaper-work won't hurt me; it will do me good. I'll be sure of five dollars a night anyway, and if I happen to get a fat assignment, it will run up to ten or twelve dollars, or even more. In a couple of weeks I'll have enough to buy you—"

"Halt," she commanded, leveling her fork at him. "Don't mention the word *dress* again, or I'll—fire."

The subject dropped, but nevertheless Stuart telephoned late in the day to remind Eve that he wouldn't be home to dinner. He was going to get a bite in town and then run in to the *Journal* office in the hope of getting an assignment. Eve made a last protest, but he was adamant. She ate a solitary meal and spent a desolate evening. It was midnight before Stuart reached home.

"Eve—why aren't you in bed?"

"I was so lonesome," she confessed. She looked at him anxiously. There was a little white scar over his right eye—"the scar of mystery," Eve called it, because Stuart was always so reticent about it. When he was tired, it always stood out more boldly. To Eve's eyes it seemed to stand out very boldly as he bent over to kiss her.

"You mustn't mope about the house," he said reproachfully. "Go out and visit the neighbors."

Eve was quite certain the next morning that she didn't want a new dress and had never wanted one. But Stuart seemed absolutely insane on the subject. Trying to convince him that what she really wanted was to have him come home to dinner and spend the evening with her was hopeless.

After lunch she went in to Boston to do a little shopping. Although she had made up her mind that she wouldn't have a new dress anyway, she visited not one but several of her favorite shops. In the course of her travels she came across it—a wonderful little frock, all soft blue crêpelike stuff and sparkling silver, set off by a touch of black fur and possessed of the supreme qualification, "It looks like me." It cost fifty-five dollars. She realized that Stuart



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would be disappointed if she didn't buy herself something with the money he was earning. And Stuart would adore the little blue-and-silver frock!

The pleasurable speculation had somewhat subsided by the time she got home. Stuart, she told herself, probably wouldn't be able to get so much, anyhow. The second evening was as dismal as the first. At ten o'clock the telephone-bell rang, and she answered, expecting to hear Stuart's voice. But it was Mrs. Sinnott speaking.

"I'm coming over for a little while," she announced—breathlessly, it seemed to Eve—and hung up the receiver before Eve could question her.

MRS. SINNOTT presented herself at the door a few minutes later. She was breathless.

"There's a man in Mrs. Bryce's house—a burglar, I mean," she said, sinking heavily into a chair. "Mrs. Bryce telephoned, and Gregory went right over to see about it—he is so reckless. He and Mr. Langdon are prowling about the place with revolvers in their hands. I got so nervous I couldn't sit and wait at home—the maids are all out. I just know that Gregory will get shot."

Eve looked at Mrs. Sinnott's white face compassionately. She was a large woman, with blonde coloring, who would have been distinctly fat if she hadn't been a willing martyr to a competent corsetière. Now her plump hands fluttered restlessly on the arms of the wicker chair, and her full bosom rose and fell spasmodically.

"Of course he went; do let me make you a cup of tea," soothed Eve, with firm faith in the restorative powers of the sovereign feminine remedy.

She started the alcohol burner. Before the water in the little brass tea-kettle had come to a boil, Mr. Sinnott himself appeared. The burglar, it seemed, had escaped—which, one gathered from Sinnott's manner, was a bit of rare good fortune for the burglar. Sinnott was pleasurably excited.

"Mrs. Bryce heard a noise," he said, "and she called out, thinking it must be her maid. The noise stopped at once, but there was no answer. A moment

later the maid presented herself—she had been in the kitchen all the time. Then Mrs. Bryce telephoned Langdon and myself. We found the window of the dressing-room wide open and the light turned on. We searched the house, but the beggar had gotten away."

Mrs. Sinnott shivered. Eve's eyes lighted with quickened interest as she questioned Sinnott further.

"Excuse me just a moment," she said when it became apparent he had told all he knew. She shut the door behind her and went to the telephone. Stuart, who had been a newspaper man while studying law, had told her enough about his work to give her a fair idea of the fabric of what, in the newspaper argot, is never called anything but a "story."

She called *The Journal*.

"Will you give me Mr. Ware, please?"

"Mr. Ware?"

"Yes—Mr. Stuart Ware. He is doing special work nights on the city staff."

There was a pause while the operator said something to somebody on the other end of the line. Then:

"Mr. Ware was in for a little while last night, but he hasn't been in at all to-night."

"Oh, you must be mistaken," protested Eve. "Please ask again. It is important. I have a story."

Another pause; then:

"This is the night editor speaking," said a man's voice. "Mr. Ware is not here. I'll take the story, if you don't mind."

"But I want Mr. Ware," persisted Eve, bewildered.

"Mr. Ware hasn't been in to-night. Want you give me the story, please?"

Eve did not answer the appeal. Her thoughts were elsewhere. She hung up the receiver mechanically. If Stuart wasn't at *The Journal*, where was he?

A KEY turned in the lock in the front door, and a moment later Stuart entered.

"Lo, Eve," he said.

"Oh, Stuart," she cried. "I was so worried about you! Where have you been? I just called *The Journal*, and they said you hadn't been there to-night."

Stuart stared at her blankly.

"You called *The Journal*?"

"Yes, just now. A burglar broke into Mrs. Bryce's house. I was going to give you the story."

"Oh, I didn't go to *The Journal* tonight. I ran into a man who had something he wanted me to do—a bit of outside business. I knew you didn't expect me home anyway."

Eve, relieved, remembered the Sinnotts. Fresh tea was brewed, and the story of the robbery was retold. Gregory was quite jovial about it—Mrs. Sinnott not to be convinced that they wouldn't all be murdered in their beds yet. after

to the reassuring rhythm of his breathing, and after a while she fell asleep again.

The next morning both she and Stuart laughed heartily over the dream. Then she remembered about the dress and told him about that.

"Oh, you'll be able to get four dresses like that if I can put a certain little deal through," said Stuart.

"What is it?"

"Oh—a law-matter," said Stuart with some hesitation. "Things are slow on *The Journal* and I've given that up."

Eve called up Mrs. Sinnott during the morning. The latter was, she said,



"There's a man in Mrs. Bryce's house—a burglar, I mean," she said, sinking heavily into a chair.

they had gone, Mrs. Sinnott still protesting her fears, Stuart telephoned the story in to *The Journal*. Eve, listening, heard him describe the burglar as a short, thick-set man.

"How did you know what the burglar looked like?" she asked.

"Oh, I tacked that on. It helps out on the space," he said with a laugh.

Eve's slumbers were troubled that night. She woke up in the middle of a dream in which Stuart was struggling in the grip of officers who were about to arrest him as a burglar, while she protested that the burglar was a short, thick-set man. She listened gratefully

"a bunch of nerves." She added that the burglar at the Bryces hadn't gone away empty handed. He had taken a fifty-dollar bill that Mrs. Bryce had in a purse on her dressing-room table.

"Mrs. Bryce will never miss it," Stuart said, when she told him about this at dinner. "I'll gamble she's got an income of fifty thousand dollars a year from the estate her husband left her."

Then they talked about other things.

EVE had told Stuart that she wouldn't be timid at being left alone. Nevertheless she was. She had also promised him that she wouldn't wait up for him,

but she was curled up in a chair in the living-room when he arrived home, just before midnight. He picked her up bodily in his arms. She opened her eyes sleepily. Indeed, she was so drowsy that a discovery she must otherwise have instantly made was postponed until the next morning.

Stuart had a black eye. The fact was undeniable.

"Got it just as I was leaving the office last night," he explained. "There's a spring gate on the reference-department, and it swung to on me. I'm going to have a doctor paint it up this morning, and for heaven's sake don't say anything about it. A lawyer should be like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. And that is more than a lawyer with a black eye can be."

Hurriedly consulting his watch, he added:

"I sha'n't be at home until late tonight, Eve. This will be the last time, I promise you. If I can put the deal through, I'll buy you a dress that will make Mrs. Sinnott's eyes stick out."

"I don't want a dress," said Eve, woe-begone. "I want you to come home. I'm sick of being left alone."

"This is the last time, sweetheart—the very last time."

Stuart said it with such vehemence that Eve, although surprised, was perforce content. She reflected, as she cleared away the breakfast-dishes, that she was paying a heavy penalty for a moment of envy. The little blue frock no longer interested her in the least.

She had just finished when Mrs. Sinnott appeared in the War Baby.

"Come to the city with me," she begged. "I've got to do some shopping, and I want company."

"The burglar was at Mr. Gale's last night," declared Mrs. Sinnott the moment they were together in the limousine. "Mr. Gale was locking up and came upon him in the back entry. He wasn't armed, fortunately. They clinched and struggled for a moment, but the burglar was ever so much stronger. He broke away almost immediately. But Mr. Gale is certain that he must have left his mark on him. He hit him in the eye so hard that his knuckles were bruised."

"Stuart—" began Eve; then she checked herself. She had been about to confide the state of Stuart's eye, but she remembered his parting injunction.

The car was threading the city traffic now.

"Oh, isn't that Mr. Ware," exclaimed Mrs. Sinnott, "—over there, with that queer-looking man? What an extraordinary type!"

Eve craned her neck and caught a fleeting glimpse of Stuart. He was walking along the sidewalk with another man who was all that Mrs. Sinnott had described. An extraordinary type, certainly.

"Stuart has dealings with all manner of people," said Eve, feeling the need of some explanation. "I shall have to ask him if he has taken up criminal cases—his practice has always run to civil cases, you know. But that man hardly looks like a plaintiff in a civil case—or even like a defendant."

The traffic-officer was motioning them on; in a moment Stuart and his companion were out of sight.

Eve stayed and had lunch with Mrs. Sinnott. It was nearly three o'clock before she arrived home and resumed her household tasks.

"These ought to go to a tailor's," she reflected, holding a pair of Stuart's trousers off at arm's-length. Mechanically she began to go through the pockets. She found the usual collection of change and, in the watch-pocket, a single bill. She put the bill and change together in a little drawer in the bureau.

AT five o'clock the front door-bell rang. It was a collector for the Salvation Army, come to gather a little donation-box that had been hopefully deposited with the Wares a few months before. The box was quite empty. Eve raced upstairs to the change in the bureau. She counted the money—seventy-three cents. Then she spread out the bill. It was brand new—fifty dollars!

Eve gasped. Fifty dollars—where could Stuart have gotten it? She was the family treasurer; fifty-dollar bills were outside her experience. What was Stuart doing with it? Why hadn't he spoken of it? She remembered the Sal-

vation Army man patiently waiting in the hallway, and scooping up the change, pushed it into the box. The man gave her a receipt, which she abstractedly accepted.

Fifty dollars! In Stuart's pockets! She wished Stuart might come home at once, so she could ask him about it. She felt as if she would burst with curiosity.



After a while a solution presented itself. The money was part of the fee Stuart expected from the outside business he had referred to—what he called a retainer. But—why hadn't Stuart told her about it?

It was all very queer. Stuart always liked to discuss his cases with her, and he hadn't said a word about this one. But then, Stuart could be very mysterious when he chose. There was the scar over his eye; he never had told her how he had got that, although it had happened during their engagement. Stuart had wanted to buy her an engagement-ring.

"I don't care for diamonds, and I do care for mahogany," she had protested. "If we don't have a ring, we can have a mahogany dining-room set."

"We'll have both," he had said grimly.

And one evening he had appeared with the scar (a fresh one with four stitches in it) and a diamond ring.

"Little girls mustn't ask questions," he had said in answer to all that she had asked him. And he never had told her about the scar.

Again her mind reverted to the fifty dollars—and Stuart's black eye!

Eve smiled at the thought that immediately flashed into mind. A burglar had taken Mrs. Bryce's fifty dollars, and Mr. Gale had given a burglar, presumably the same one, a black eye. The parallel was deadly; she would have to tell Stuart about it. She would add that she hoped he could provide himself with an alibi, because although she was very sorry

"Gregory went right over to see about it—he is so reckless. He and Mr. Langdon are prowling about the place with revolvers in their hands."

indeed, he couldn't prove anything by *her*. She glanced at the clock. The hands pointed to eight. Eve wondered, hopefully, if Stuart would be home by eleven.

She picked up a magazine, opened it casually and dipped into the story that met her eye. It was a weird story, an impossible story. It told of a man, living with his wife in a neighborhood somewhat like theirs. The man, respected, ostensibly a broker, was forced at times (by business, he told his wife) to absent himself from home at night. Eve read on, her cheeks flushed, her breath coming faster. It was a horrible story, but it fascinated her. The man was a burglar; he preyed upon his neighbors. The burglar, surprised by a young girl, shot her dead. The young wife quite innocently related the details of the murder to her husband, who had just returned from one of his mysterious business trips. As she finished, there was a summons at the front door. She saw her husband's face go white; she heard a voice in the hall, rose and saw a policeman's face—

IT held Eve in its grip like a horrid nightmare. When she had finished, she strove to throw off its spell. The story was preposterous, impossible. She looked at the clock—nine-fifteen. Fifty-dollar bills and bruised eyes, mysterious business at night—all this obsessed her mind. She tried to smile at herself, but it was a pitiful effort. Five minutes, ten minutes, the little clock on the mantel ticked off. Then:

"I want Stuart to come home, I want Stuart to come home," she sobbed, crumpling down in her chair.

The tears precipitated a panic. She strove vainly to con-

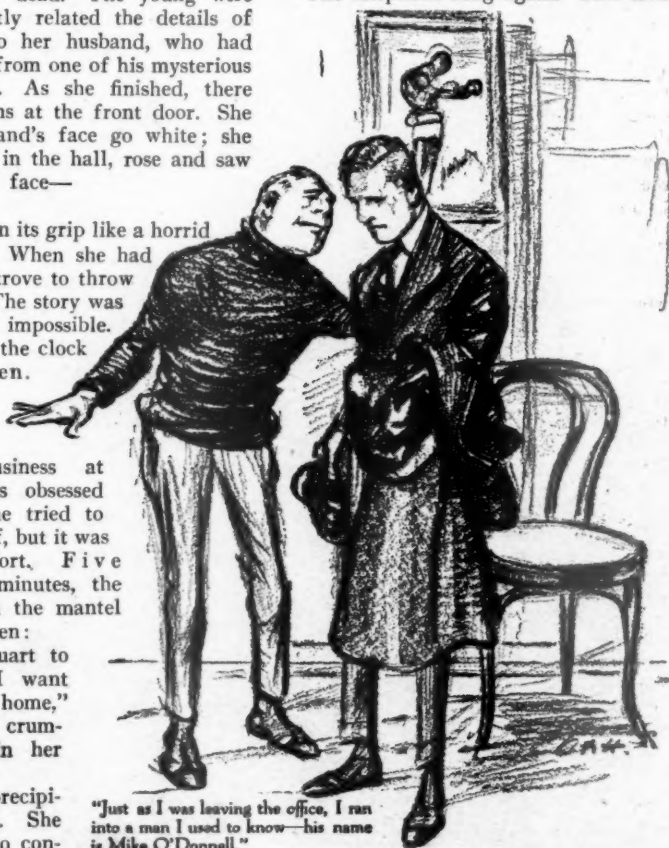
trol herself, to stop what, she repeated to herself over and over again, were foolish thoughts. But relentlessly her mind kept at work.

Eleven o'clock came. She began to watch the minute-hand until she felt that she must go insane if it were not less deliberate. The telephone-bell rang; Eve ran to it—and Mrs. Sinnott spoke.

"I saw your light, and I told Gregory that you must be waiting for Mr. Ware," explained Mrs. Sinnott. "I thought I'd call you up and tell you that the burglar has been caught—at least, Gregory just heard so. Aren't you relieved?"

Eve was—more than Mrs. Sinnott realized. The nightmare vanished; her heart began to sing a little song. She was almost effusive in her thanks.

The telephone rang again. This time



"Just as I was leaving the office, I ran into a man I used to know—his name is Mike O'Donnell."

it *must* be Stuart. But the voice on the other end of the 'phone was strange.

"Mr. Ware has been detained at the police-station—"

Eve fainted.

FIFTEEN minutes later, when Stuart burst through the front door like a tornado, he found her sobbing brokenly.

"Eve—Eve, dearest, what is the trouble?" he cried, and then caught her up into his arms. She could not speak. She could only cling to him, weeping. Presently the storm subsided.

"I—I thought they had arrested you," said Eve, lifting a tear-ravaged face. "I—I found fifty dollars in your pocket, and—and you had a—black eye. And—it was such a long time," she sobbed. "And there was such a horrid story in a magazine about a—burglar."

"Eve, you didn't think—but the quicker I tell you the story, the better, I guess. I did want you to have the dress. Then when I went to *The Journal* that first night, they told me they were laying off men everywhere. Just as I was leaving the office, I ran into a man I used to know—his name is Mike O'Donnell."

"A man with an awful face?"

"Mike isn't exactly a beauty. But where did you ever see him?"

"I—I saw you in town with him to-day."

"Oh! Well, I first ran across Mike when I was in law school. He is an old-time pug—a prize-fighter, that is. He used to give me lessons. And he got talking about a time he and I—"

Stuart hesitated. Then: "I suppose I might as well make a clean breast of it. Thursday I went to Mike's 'studio,'—he gives boxing-lessons,—and got the black eye. And also the fifty dollars."

"Because you got the black eye?" interrupted Eve.

Stuart smothered a smile. "No—that fifty came from a man who manages a boxing-club. It was a retainer for a—case. The name of the case was Jack Twin Flaherty. He and I went six rounds to-night, and—I got one hundred and fifty dollars for putting him out in the sixth."

Eve's eyes were perplexed.

"It was a boxing-match. Toots." Stuart confessed. "I'm awfully sorry."

Eve placed an accusing finger on the scar of mystery. "Did you get that—that way?"

"The same way," he admitted. "I was clever at boxing, and I wanted you to have an engagement-ring. I made up my mind *that* would be the last time. By George, I'm sure *this* is!"

"But the police-station—" began Eve.

"Oh, yes. I walked up from the station, and just as I turned into Forest Street, a man poked a revolver in my face, and—I hate to admit it, Eve, but—he got the money."

"Not really!"

Stuart nodded shamefacedly. Eve knew he felt badly. "It doesn't make the slightest difference, dear," she began. The telephone cut her short. "It rang four," she cried, and dashed to answer.

"Yes—yes. They want you, Stuart."

"Hello," said Stuart, taking the receiver. "Yes—short and thick-set—that's him. . . . Two fifties, both brand new. . . . Bully for you, and thanks for calling. Good night."

He put the receiver back.

"Stuart. What is it? Tell me this instant."

"They've got the man. The money is evidence now—in the captain's safe. We'll get it back to-morrow."

Eve's eyes lighted up with a light in which the beatific and the unholy were somehow blended. "Then I'll—I'll—no, it would be too extravagant."

"Go on," commanded Stuart. "What did I commit pugilism for, except to let you be extravagant for once?"

"Then I'll get the little blue dress and slippers and stockings to match, and new gloves and a real evening coat that doesn't have to be a daytime coat too, and I'll be all new from head to foot, and not one makeshift about me!"

Stuart smiled as he looked down at her. "You'll be utterly adorable," he prophesied.

Eve clung to him for a moment. Then she tilted her face upward toward his. She had undergone one of those amazingly swift transitions; in her eyes was an almost passionately wistful appeal.

"Oh, Stuart, do you *really* think so?"

Résumé of the
Opening Chapters
of the new novel
**WE CAN'T HAVE
EVERYTHING!**

This is different from the ordinary serial synopsis. It conveys not only the action of the novel, but the spirit of the story as well. You can read it and begin the story with an adequate knowledge of the theme.



THREE of the most interesting women characters in fiction appear in this new novel by Mr. Hughes.

There is Charity Coe Cheever, of unlimited wealth and of such unlimited loveliness of character that everyone called her "Sweet Charity Coe," even after her marriage. She has everything in the world, except the one thing she wants most: the love of her husband, the dashing Peter Cheever. She held that for only a few months after his tempestuous wooing won her from the lifelong adoration of Jim Dyckman. Then Cheever cooled and his interest became absorbed in Zada L'Etoile, a dancer. Zada has an abundance of fiery beauty, a volcanic

temper and an appetite for alluring men.

Then there is Kedzie Thropp, a luscious village peach. Her life in Nimrim, Missouri, was uneventful. She always complained that she never had been anywhere, or seen anything, or known anyone worth knowing. Her chance came when her father, a claim adjuster, had to go to New York and took Kedzie and her mother with him. On the train, a wag recommended "Mrs. Biltmore's boarding-house." When the tricked Thropp learned Biltmore prices, he ordered Kedzie and her mother to pack. But Kedzie was in love with the grandeur of the hotel. She refused to budge. Thropp *père* asserted himself. He turned Kedzie across his knee and spanked her. That made her obey his commands, but it aroused all her resentment, and in the traffic outside the hotel, she vanished.

WHILE her frantic father and mother were imploring the police and newspapers of New York to help find their daughter, Kedzie had taken a subway to the Bronx and hidden herself in the gloom of a moving-picture theater. She was fascinated by the play shown on the screen, and decided to adopt the name of one of the characters, Anita Adair, for her career in New York.

That night Kedzie slept in a park. Next morning she breakfasted in a cheap restaurant and flirted with Skip Magruder, the waiter. He found her a job in a candy-store and made crude love to her. Kedzie accepted it all till her rapidly widening vision beckoned to more "classy" things.

She left the candy-store to pose for calendar pictures, and there met young Gilfoyle, an advertising writer and a poet.

Unconsciously it was Sweet Charity Coe who helped Kedzie in her next step. Charity had been learning what sorrow meant. When she returned from helping the wounded and orphans in France, she went to the mountains to recuperate. On the train back to New York, she met big Jim Dyckman, who, as everyone knew, still loved her.

As Charity and Jim left the train, they were observed by Prissy Atterbury, a male gossip. He was on his way to a house-party. In telling what he had seen, he implied that Jim and Charity had been in the mountains together. The gossip was hard for Charity to bear. It was silenced, however, when Mrs. Noxon, leader at Newport, invited her as a house guest for her annual fête. Kedzie also came on for the fête—as one of the dancing nymphs in a group of entertainers. Jim Dyckman, who was there, showed an admiring interest in Kedzie. That hurt Charity—she did not know why.

While dancing, Kedzie slipped on a wet stone and fell into the fountain pool.

Dyckman rescued her, but the manager of the troupe "fired" her. Charity was touched then, and promised to help the girl get a new job.

The first job Kedzie got was that of wife to Gilfoyle. She married him in haste the day after she returned to New York, and repented in greater haste. He was just like everything else: she wanted him only until she got him.

Charity decided to give a great motion-picture play, with society folk as actors, to help her orphans. Incidentally she managed to get Kedzie a position with a motion-picture company. There the girl's lush beauty commanded instant attention. Ferriday, the director, promised to make her the best-known woman in the world. He also offered to make her his wife, but though she had not told him, she still had Gilfoyle on her hands. The poet simplified her problems by getting a job in Chicago; so Kedzie moved to better quarters and started on the career of a "movie" star.



The scene when Kedzie met her first sweetheart in New York, "Skip" Magruder.

KEDZIE'S next meeting with Dyckman came in the studio. Charity had induced Jim to act as manager for her show. He capitulated as quickly before Kedzie's soft beauty as lesser men had done.

Ferriday immediately conceived the scheme of having Dyckman finance a film play to star Kedzie. He got Dyckman to spend a lot of money advertising her, but Jim was not anxious to act as "angel" for a new company. Instead, when the studio where she had been working burned, he proposed marriage. Nothing would have pleased Kedzie more than to marry him at once, for by now her ambition was to become of "the society world," but there was Gilfoyle as a barrier. Of course, Dyckman could not be told of him, but how to make her husband her ex-husband without publicity was a problem.

An even greater problem was troubling Charity Coe. In desperation, she had put detectives on Cheever and Zada L'Etoile. They installed a dictagraph in Zada's apartment, and eavesdropping over its wire, Charity found that her husband was even more at home in his mistress' home than in his wife's and, worst of all, that Zada, the dancer, was to mother him a child.

Such is the human tangle in the novel up to now. The story is resumed on the following page.

We Can't Have

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "What Will People Say?" "Empty Pockets"
and "The Thirteenth Commandment."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WE must fly fast and keep on flying if we would escape from our pasts. Ambition, adventure or sheer luck may carry us forward out of them as in a cavalry-foray over strange frontiers, but sooner or later we must wait for our wagons or fall back to them.

Kedzie's past was catching up with her. It is a glorious thing when one's past comes up loaded with food, munitions, good deeds, charities, mercies, valued friendships. But poor little Kedzie's little past included one incompetent and unacknowledged husband and two village parents.

Kedzie had concealed the existence of Gilfoyle from her new friends as anxiously as if he had been a baby born out of wedlock instead of a grown man born into it. And Gilfoyle had returned the compliment. He had not told his new friends in Chicago that he was married, because the Anita Adair that he had left in New York was, as F. P. A. would say, his idea of nothing to brag about.

Gilfoyle had loved Kedzie once as a pretty photographer's model, and had admired her as an exquisite dancing-creature who seemed to have spun off at a tangent from the painted side of an old Greek amphora. He had actually written poetry to her! And when a poet has done that for a girl, he feels that he has done more for her than she can ever repay. Even if she gives him her mortal self, what is that to the immortality he has given her?

When Kedzie telegraphed Gilfoyle that she had lost her job in Newport and had arrived in New York lonely and afraid, had he not taken care of her good name by giving her his own? Not to mention a small matter of all his money!

She had repaid him with frantic discontent. The morning after the wedding, was she not imitating the parrot's shrill ridicule of life and love? Did she ridicule his poetry, or didn't she? She did. Instead of being his nine Muses, she became his three Furies.



Peter Cheever and Zeda L'Etoile, who fascinated him because he never knew what she would do or say—or throw—next.

Everything!

Illustrated by
James
Montgomery
Flagg

When he lost his job and she went out to get one of her own, had she succeeded in getting anything with dignity in it? No! She became an extra woman in a movie-mob. That was a belittling thing to remember. But worst of all, she had committed the unpardonable sin for a woman—she had lent him money. He could never forgive or forget the horrible fact that he had borrowed her last cash to pay his fare to Chicago.

Next to that for inexcusableness was her self-support—and worse, self-sufficiency. Gilfoyle had sent Kedzie no money beyond returning what he had borrowed, and she had not used that to buy a ticket to Chicago with. She had written rarely, and had not asked him for money. That was mighty convenient for him, but it was extremely suspicious, and he cherished it as a further grudge.

He never found himself quite flush enough to force any money on her, because he had found that it costs money to live in Chicago too. People in New York get the idea that it costs everything to live in New York and nothing to live anywhere else—if it can be called living.

Gilfoyle also discovered that his gifts were not appreciated in Chicago as he had expected them to be. Chicago people seemed to think it quite natural for New York to call for help from Chicago, and successful Western men were constantly going East; but for a New Yorker to revert to Chicago looked queer. He appeared to patronize, and yet he must have had some peculiar reason for giving up New York.

All in all and by and large, Gilfoyle was not happy in Chicago. The few persons, mainly women, who took him up as an interesting novelty, grew tired of him. His advertising schemes did not dazzle the alert Illini. For one reason or another the wares he celebrated did not "go big."

He lost his first job and took an inferior wage with a shabbier firm. He took his women friends to the movies now instead of the theaters. And so it was that one night when he was beaung a Denver woman, who was on her way to New York and fame, he found the box-line extending out on the sidewalk and halfway up the block. It was irksome to wait, but people like to go to shows where the crowds are. He took his place in the line, and his Miss Clampett stood at his elbow.

The queue was slowly drawn into the theater and he finally reached a place in front of the lithographs. He almost jumped out of his skin when he saw a colossal



Kedzie Thropp,
alias Anita Adair.

head of Anita Adair smiling at him from a sunbonnet streaming with curls.

THE letterpress informed Gilfoyle that it was indeed his own Anita. The people in the line were talking of her as the new star. They were calling her familiarly by her first name and discussing her with all the freedom of the crowd:

"That's Anita—aint she sweet?"

"Everybody says Anita's just too lovely."

"Some queen, boy? Me for Anita. She can pack her clothes in my trunk!"

Gilfoyle felt that he ought in common decency to knock down this fellow who claimed the privileges belonging to himself. But he remembered that he had never claimed those privileges. And the fellow looked unrefinedly powerful.

Gilfoyle gnawed the lip of silence, realizing also that his announcement would make a strange impression on Miss Clampett. She was one of those authors one reads about who think it necessary to hunt experiences and live romances in order to find literary material.

Gilfoyle had done his best to teach her how wildly well a born New Yorker can play the lute of emotion. To proclaim now that he was the anonymous husband of this glitterer on the billboard would have been a shocking confession.

Gilfoyle swallowed his secret, but it made his heart flutter tremendously. When at length he and Miss Clampett were admitted to the theater and walked down the aisle, Kedzie came from the background of the screen forward as if to meet him. She came on and on, and finally as he reached his seat, a close-up of her brought them face to face with a vividness that almost knocked him over.

He felt as guilty as if she had actually caught him at a rendezvous. Yet he felt pride, too.

This luminous being was his wife. He remembered all that she had been to him. Miss Clampett noted his perturbations and made a brilliant guess at their cause. She asked him if he wanted to leave her and go around to the stage door to meet this wonderful Miss

Adair. Gilfoyle laughed poorly at her quip. He was surprised to learn from her that Anita Adair was already a sensation among the film-stars. He had not chanced to read the pages where her press-matter had celebrated her. He defended himself from the jealousy of Miss Clampett very lamely; for the luscious beauty of his Anita, her graphic art and her sway over the audience, rekindled his primal emotions to a greater fire than ever.

When the show was over, he abandoned Miss Clampett on her doorstep and went to his own boarding-house in a nympholepsy. He was a mortal wedded to a fairy. He was Endymion with a moon enamored of him. Kedzie indeed had come down from the screen to Gilfoyle, clothed in an unearthly effulgence.

The next morning he turned to the moving-picture columns of *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Herald* and the other papers, and he found that Kedzie was celebrated there with enthusiasm by "Mae Tinee," Mrs. Parsons and the rest of the critics of the new art. On Sunday several of her interviews appeared, and her portraits, in eminent company.

Gilfoyle's forgotten affections came back to life, expanding and efflorescent. He throbbed with the wonder of it. The moving picture had brought romance again to earth.

Thousands of men all over the country were falling in love with Kedzie. Who had a better right to than her husband? Unconsciously his resentments against her fell away. His heart swelled with such plenitude of forgiveness that he might in time have overlooked the money she lent him. It was not a disgrace to accept money from a genius of her candle-power.

For a long while he had been afraid that she would telegraph him for funds, or descend on him in Chicago and bring a heavy baggage of necessities. Now he was no longer afraid of that. He was afraid that if he called on her in New York, she might not remember him.

He had heard of the real and the alleged salaries of moving-picture stars, and he assumed that Kedzie must be as

well paid as she was well advertised. He did not know of the measly little hundred dollars a week she was bound down to by her contract. If he had known, he would have rejoiced, because one hundred dollars a week was about four times more than Gilfoyle had ever earned.

OF course Gilfoyle resolved to go to New York. Of course he started to telegraph his wife and found the telegram hard to write. Then he began a long letter and found it harder to write. And of course he finally decided to surprise her. His resignation was accepted with humiliating cordiality.

Of course he took the Twentieth Century Limited to New York. It was more expensive, but it was quicker; and what did a few dollars matter, now that he was the husband of such an earner? He had unwittingly hitched his wagon to a star, and now he would take a ride through heaven. He wrote a poem or two to that effect, and the train-wheels inspired his prosody.

He dreamed of an ideal life in which he should loll upon a sofa of ease thrumming his lyre, while his wife devoted herself to her career outside.

Where would Horace and Virgil have been if they had not had their expenses paid by old Mr. Mæcenas? Since Mrs. Gilfoyle could afford to be a patroness, let her patronage begin at home. Her reward would be beyond price, for Gilfoyle decided to perpetuate her fame in powerful rhyme far outlasting the celluloid in which she was writing her name now.

Celluloid is perishable indeed, and very inflammable. Gilfoyle did not know that the Hyperfilm studio had burned to the ground before he saw Kedzie's picture in Chicago. But he blithely left that city to its fate and sped eastward to his own.

CHAPTER XXXIX

KEDZIE wanted to be a lady, and with the ladies stand—a tall tiara in her hair, a lorgnette in her hand.

She had succeeded dizzily, tremen-

dously, in her cinema career. The timid thing that had watched the moving-picture director to see how he held his wineglass, and accepted his smile as a beam of sunshine breaking through the clouds about his godlike head, now found his gracefulness "actory," his intimacy impudent and his association compromising. Ferriday's very picturesqueness and artistry convinced her now that he was not quite the gentleman.

Kedzie was beginning to imitate the upper dialect already. She who but a twelvemonth past was dividing people into "hicks" and "swells," and whose epithets were "reub" and "classy," was now a generation advanced.

Ferriday saw it and raged. One day in discussing the cast of a picture, he mentioned the screen-pet Lorraine Melnotte as the man for the principal male rôle. Kedzie sighed:

"Oh, he is so hopelessly romantic, never quite the gentleman. In costume he gets by, but in evening clothes he always suggests the handsome waiter—don't you think?"

Ferriday roared with disgust:

"Good Lord, but you're growing. What is this thing I've invented? Are you a *Frankenstein*?"

Kedzie looked blank and sneered:

"Are you implying that I have Yiddish blood in me?"

She wondered why he laughed, but she would not ask. Along many lines Kedzie did not know much, but in others she was uncannily acute.

Kedzie was gleaning all her ideas of gentlemanship from Jim Dyckman. She knew that he had lineage and heritage and equipage and all that sort of thing, and he must be great because he knew great people. His careless simplicity, artlessness, shyness, all the things that distressed her at first, were now accepted as the standards of conduct for everybody.

In life as in other arts, the best artists grow from the complex to the simple, the tortuous to the direct, from pose to poise, from tradition to truth, from artifice to reality. Kedzie was beginning to understand this and to ape what she could not do naturally.

Her cometlike scoot from obscurity to



A cold arm seemed to drag her back. She slid from Dyckman's knees, gasping: "Oh!" She could

not become M



JAMES MONTEMAYOR FLAGG

not become Mrs. Jim Dyckman, because she was Mrs. Thomas Gilfoyle. Dyckman was astounded.

fame in the motion-picture sky had exhausted the excitement of that sky, and now she was ashamed of being a wage-earner, a mere actress, especially a movie actress.

If the studio had not caught fire and burned up so many thousands of yards of her portraiture, she would have broken her contract without scruple. But the shock of the loss of her pretty images drove her back to the scene. The pity of so much thought, emotion, action, going up in smoke was too cruel to endure.

It was not necessary for Dyckman to pay the expenses of their repetition in celluloid, as he offered. The Hyperfilm Company rented another studio and began to remake the destroyed pictures. They were speedily renewed because the scenarios had been rescued and there was little of that appalling waste of time, money and effort which has almost wrecked the whole industry. They did not photograph a thousand feet for every two hundred used.

Kedzie's first pictures had gone to the exchanges before the fire, and they were continuing their travels about the world while she was at work revamping the rest.

ABOUT this time the Hyperfilm managers decided to move their factory to California, where the sempiternal sunlight ensured better photography at far less expense. This meant that Kedzie must leave New York only partly conquered and must tear herself away from Jim Dyckman.

She broke down and cried when she told Dyckman of this, and for the first time his sympathies were stamped on her account. He petted her, and she slid into his arms with a childlike ingratitude that made his heart swell with pity.

"What's the odds," he said, attempting consolation, "where you work, so long as you work?"

"But it would mean," she sobbed, "it would mean taking me away-ay from you-ou."

This tribute enraptured Dyckman incredibly. That he should mean so much to so wonderful a thing as she was, was

unbelievably flattering. He had dogged Charity's heels with meek and unrewarded loyalty until he had lost all pride. Kedzie's tears at the thought of leaving him woke it to life again.

"By golly, you sha'n't go, then," he cried. "I was thinking of coming out there to visit you, but—but it would be better yet for you to stay right here in little old New York."

This brought back Kedzie's smile. But she faltered:

"What if they hold me to my contract, though?"

"Then we'll bust the old contract. I'll buy 'em off. You needn't work for anybody."

There was enough of the old-fashioned woman of one sort left in Kedzie to relish the slave-block glory of being fought over by two purchasers. She spoke rather slyly:

"But I'll be without wages then. How would I live? I've got to work."

Dyckman answered at once:

"Of course not. I'll take care of you. I offered to before, you know." He had made a proposal of marriage sometime before; it was the only sort of proposal that he had been tempted to make to Kedzie. He liked her immensely; she fascinated him; he loved to pet her and kiss her and talk baby-talk to her; but she had never overwhelmed him with emotions.

Either it was the same with her, or she had purposely controlled herself and him from policy, or had been restrained by coldness or by a certain decency, of which she had a good deal after all and in spite of all.

Throughout their relations they had deceived Ferriday and other cynics. For all their indifference to appearances, they had behaved like a well-behaved pair of young betrothed Americans, with a complete freedom from chaperonage, and a considerable liberality of endearments, but no serious misdemeanor.

Kedzie knew what he meant, but she wanted to hear him propose again. So she murmured:

"How do you mean, take care of me?"

"I mean—marry you, of course."

"Oh!" said Kedzie. And in a whirlwind of pride she twined her arms about



ANGEL MONTGOMERY

His response was



response was a most ungodly wrath. He got to his feet, muttering: "I ought to kill him. Maybe I will. I've got to beat him within an inch of his life."

his neck and clung to him with a desperate ardor.

Dyckman said: "You said you wanted time to think it over. Haven't you thought it over yet?"

"Yes," Kedzie sighed, but she said no more.

"Well, what's the answer?" he urged. "Yes."

She whispered, torn between rapture and despair.

ANY woman might have blazed with pride at being asked to marry Jim Dyckman. The little villager was almost consumed like another Semele scorched by Jupiter's rash approach.

In Dyckman's clasp Kedzie felt how lonely she had been. She wanted to be gathered in from the dangers of the world, from poverty and from work. She had not realized how tiny a thing she was, to be combatting the big city all alone, until some one offered her shelter.

People can usually be brave and grim in the presence of defeat and peril and hostility. It is the kind word, the sudden victory, the discovery of a friend that breaks one down. Even Kedzie wept.

She wept all over Jim Dyckman's waistcoat, sat on his lap and swallowed throat-lumps and tears and tugged at his scarf-pin with her little fingers.

Then she looked up at him and blushed and kissed him fiercely, hugging him with all the might of her arms. He was troubled by the first frenzy she had ever shown for him, and he might have learned how much more than a merely pretty child she was, if she had not suddenly felt an icy hand laid on her hands, unclasping them.

A cold arm seemed to bend about her throat and drag her back. She slid from Dyckman's knees, gasping:

"Oh!"

She could not become Mrs. Jim Dyckman, because she was Mrs. Thomas Gilfoyle.

Dyckman was astounded and frightened by her action. He put his hand out, but she unclenched his fingers from her wrist, mumbling:

"Don't—please!"

"Why not? What's wrong with you, child?"

How could she tell him? What could she do? She must do a lot of thinking. On one thing she was resolved: that she would not give Dyckman up. She would find Gilfoyle and get quit of him. They had been married so easily; there must be an easy way of unmarrying.

She studied Dyckman. She must not frighten him away, or let him suspect. She laughed nervously and went back to his arms, giggling:

"Such a wonderful thing it is to have you want me for your wife! I'm not worthy of your name, or your love, or anything."

Dyckman could hardly agree to this, whatever misgivings might be shaking his heart. He praised her with the best adjectives in his scant vocabulary and asked her when they should be wed.

"Oh, not for a long while yet," she pleaded.

"Why?" he wondered.

"Oh, because!" It sickened and alarmed her to put off the day, but how could she name it?

When he left her at last, the situation was still a bit hazy. He had proposed and been accepted vaguely. But when he had gallantly asked her to "say when," she had begged for time.

DYCKMAN, once outside the spell of Kedzie's eyes and her warmth, felt more and more dubious. He was ashamed of himself for entertaining any doubts of the perfection of his situation, but he was ashamed also of his easy surrender. Here he was with his freedom gone. He had escaped the marriage-net of so many women of so much brilliance and prestige, and yet a little movie actress had landed him.

He compared Anita Adair with Charity Coe, and he had to admit that his fiancée suffered woefully in every contrast. He could see the look of amazement on Charity's face when she heard the news. She would be completely polite about it, but she would be appalled. So would his father and mother. They would fight him tremendously. His friends would give him the laugh, the big ha-ha! They would say he had made a fool of himself; he had been an easy mark for a little outsider.

He wondered just how it had happened. The fact was that Kedzie had appealed to his pity. That was what none of the other eligibles had ever done, least of all Charity the ineligible.

He went home. He found his father and mother playing double Canfield and wrangling over it as usual. They were disturbed by his manner. He would not tell them what was the matter and left them to their game. It interested them no more. It seemed so unimportant whether the cards fell right or not. The points were not worth the excitement. Their son was playing solitaire, and it was not coming out at all. They discussed the possible reasons for his gloom. There are so many.

"I wish he'd get married to some nice girl," sighed Mrs. Dyckman. A mother is pretty desperate when she wants to surrender her son to another woman.

CHAPTER XL

KEDZIE made a bad night of it. She hated her loneliness. She hated her room. She hated her maid. She wanted to live in the Dyckman palace and have a dozen maids and a pair of butlers to boss around, and valets, and a crest on her paper, and invitations pouring in from people whose pictures were in "the social world." She wanted to snub somebody, and show certain folks what was what.

The next morning she was sure of only one thing, and that was that Dyckman had asked her to be his wife; and be his wife she would, no matter what it cost.

She wondered how she could get rid of Gilfoyle, whom she looked upon now as nothing less than an abductor. He was one of those "cadets" the papers had been full of a few years before, who lured young girls to ruin under the guise of false marriages and then sold them as "white slaves."

Kedzie's wrath was at the fact that Gilfoyle was not legally an abductor. She would have been glad merely to be ruined, and she would have rejoiced at the possibility of a false marriage. In the movies the second villain only pre-

tended to be a preacher, and then confessed his guilt. But such an easy solution was not for Kedzie. New York City had licensed Gilfoyle's outrage; the Clerk had sold her to him for two dollars; the Municipal Building was the too, too solid witness.

She felt a spiritual solace in the fact that she had not had a religious marriage. The sacrament was only municipal and did not count. Her wedding had lacked the blessing of the duly constituted ministry; therefore it was sacrilegious; therefore it was her conscientious duty to undo the pagan knot as quickly as possible. She reverted to the good old way of the Middle Ages. There was no curse of divorce then, and indeed there was small need of it, since annulment could usually be managed on one religious ground or another, or if not, people went about their business as if it had been managed.

Kedzie felt absolved of any fault of selfishness now, and justified in taking any steps necessary to the punishment of Gilfoyle. *Religion* is a large, loose word, and it can be made to fit any motive; but once assumed, it seems to strengthen every resolution, to chloroform mercy and hallow any means to the self-sanctified end. What people would shrink from as inhuman they constantly embrace as divine.

Kedzie wondered how she could communicate with her adversary. She might best go to Chicago and fight herself free there. There would be less risk of Dyckman's hearing about it.

She shuddered at what she would have to tell him unless she kept the divorce secret. He might not love her if he knew she was not the nice new girl he thought her, but an old married woman. And what would he say when he found that her real name was Mrs. Thomas Gilfoyle *née* Kedzie Thropp?

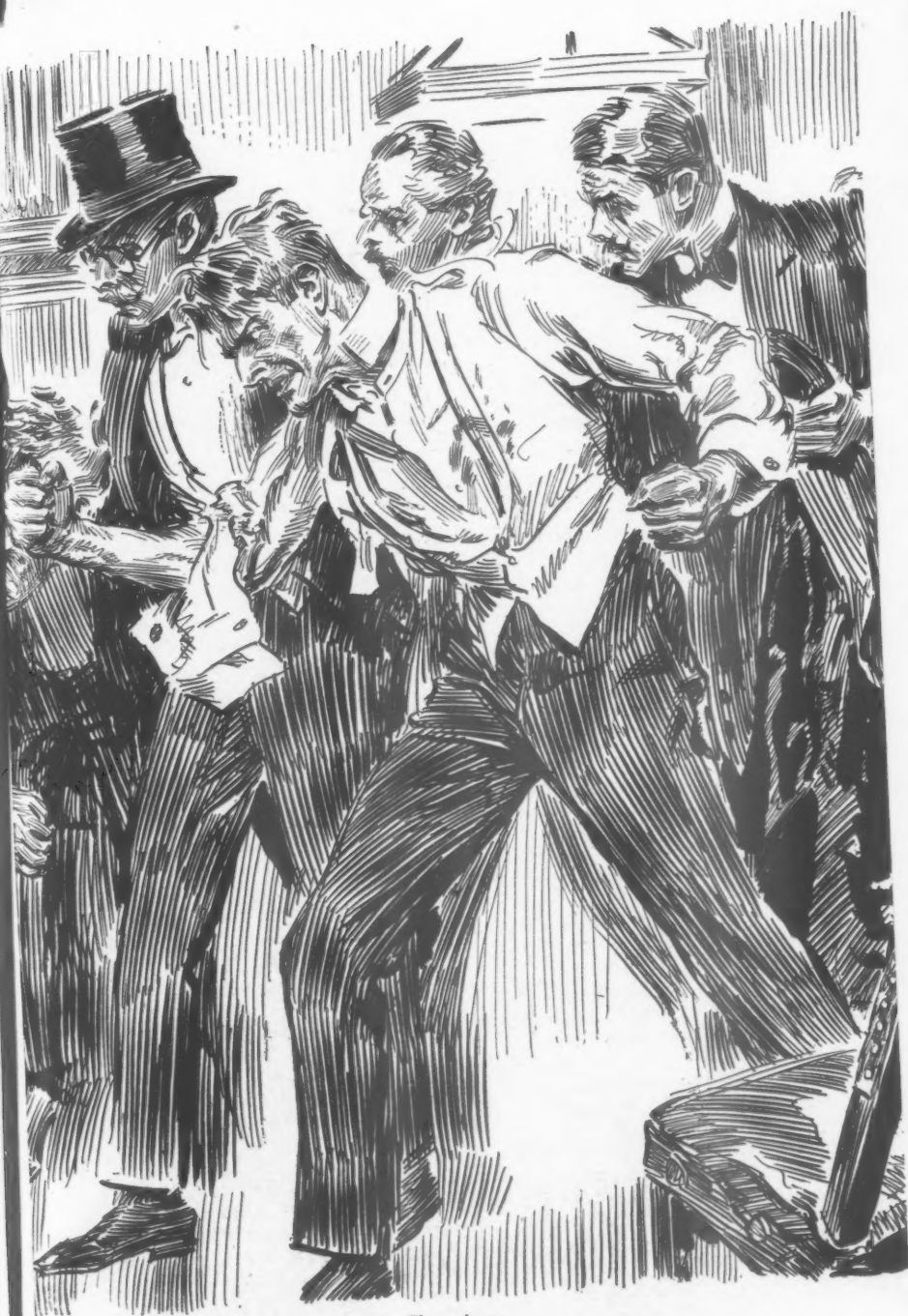
BUT first Kedzie must divorce herself from the Hyperfilm Company. She went to the studio with rage in her heart. She told Ferriday that she would not go to California. He proposed that she break with the Hyperfilm Company and form a corporation of her own with Dyckman as angel.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Dyckman put home one magnificent, majestic, mellifluous swing, with

all his bod



all his body in it. It planted an earthquake under Cheever's ear.

Kedzie was wroth at this. From now on, spending Dyckman's money would be like spending her own. Ferriday, once her accomplice in the noble business of getting Dyckman to back her, was revealed now as a cheap swindler trying to keep Mrs. Dyckman in trade at her husband's expense.

"I'm through with the pictures, I tell you!" she stormed. "I don't want to be incorporated or photographed or interviewed. I want to be let alone. I'm tired. I've worked too hard. I need a rest."

Ferriday hated her with great agility. He had been willing to abet her breach of contract, provided she let him form a new company, but if she would not, that made a great difference. He reminded her:

"The Hyperfilm Company will hold you to your bond. They want your hundred and twenty-five pounds of flesh. If you should break with them, they'd have a case against you for damages."

"How much?" said Kedzie, feeling like Mrs. Cræsus.

Ferriday whistled and murmured: "Spoken like the wife of a multimillionaire! So you've got him at last."

"To who," Kedzie began with an owl-like effect that she corrected with some confusion, "—to whom do you refer to?"

Ferriday grinned: "You're going to marry out of the movies, and you're going to try to horn into sassiety. Well, I warned you before that if you became Dyckman's wife you would find his world vastly different from the ballroom and drawing-room stuff you pull off in the studio—strangely and mysteriously different."

He frightened her. She was not sure of herself. She could not forget Nimir, Missouri, and her arrival at the edge of society via the Bronx, the candyshop and the professional camera.

She felt that the world had not treated her squarely. Why should she have to carry all this luggage of her past through the gate with her? She wondered if it would not be better to linger in the studios till she grew more famous and could bring a little prestige along.

But Ferriday was already ousting her even from that security.

"The managers of the Hyperfilm Company will think you have done them dirt, but I'll explain that you are not really responsible. You've seen a million dollars, and you're razzle-dazzled. They'll want a bit of that million, I suppose, as liquidated damages, but I'll try to keep them down."

Kedzie was at bay in her terror. She struck back.

"Tell 'em they wont get a cent if they try to play the hog."

"They don't have hogs on Fifth Avenue, Anita. Don't forget that. Well, good-by and good luck."

This was more like an eviction than a desertion. Kedzie felt a little *attendssement* toward the old homestead.

"I'm sure I'm much obliged for all you've done for me."

Ferriday roared.

She went on: "I am. Honest-ly! And I hope I haven't caused you too much inconvenience."

Ferriday betrayed how much he was hurt, by his violent efforts to conceal it.

"Not at all. It happens that I've just found another little girl to take your place. This one drifted in among the extras, just as you did, and she's a dream. I'll show her to the managers, and they may be so glad to get her they wont charge you a cent. In fact, if you say the word, I might manage it so that they would pay you something to cancel your contract."

This was quite too cruel. It crushed the tears out of Kedzie's eyes, and she had no fight left in her. She simply stammered:

"No, thank you. Don't bother. Well, good-by."

"Good-by, Anita—good luck!"

He let her make her way out of his office alone. She had to skirt the studio. From behind a canvas wall over which the Cooper-Hewitt tubes rained a quivering blue glare came the words of the assistant director:

"Now choke her, Hazlitt! Harder! Register despair, Miss Hardy. Try to scream and can't! That's good. Now, Walsh, jump in to the rescue. Slug him. Knock his bean off. 'S enough! Fall, Hazlitt. Now gather up Miss Hardy,

"MARY Ellen was tickling the boxing kangaroo under the chin. They were smiling into each other's faces like sisters. Mr. Evans completed the tableau, pleased as a young mother showing off Baby's first tooth."



Mary Ellen and the Marsupial Mammal

By Zelda Sears

ILLUSTRATED BY
M. L. BLUMENTHAL

"SAY what you may, my dear, camels are not art!" The Character Comédienne's tone was that of one stating truth, absolute, eternal and incontrovertible.

"But they do look so natural in the desert-scene of this play," ventured her dressing-room-mate, the blonde Ingénue.

"Natural!" snorted the older actress. "Natural! Why, any capable property-man could take half a day, an empty barrel and his wife's last year's furs and build a camel that'd be much more natural than a real one! And *it*,"—she hit the pronoun with bitter emphasis,—"*it* wouldn't roam around looking for feet it could stamp on, either!"

"Old Apollo didn't step on you on purpose last night," pleaded the Ingénue. "He's an awfully sweet-dispositioned camel. . . . It's awfully strange to me you don't like animals," she added.

The Comédienne turned in surprise.

"I do like 'em—in their place! Why, my two favorite forms of entertainment are menageries and grand opera. What I object to is dragging 'em onto the stage. Of course, vaudeville's different. Animals seem sort of suitable there. I've been on the bill with lots of 'em and never minded a bit. In fact, there were one or two I got downright attached to."

She paused, and a retrospective smile wreathed her amiable but overplump features.

"Fifteen minutes! All in?" chanted the call-boy outside the dressing-room door.

"Yes," the Comédienne called ab-

sently in answer. Then briskly she turned to where the Ingénue perched upon a trunk. "Ever see Queenie, the boxing kangaroo?"

The Ingénue shook her head.

"I haven't noticed her billed at any of the vaudeville houses for quite a while. Probably retired and settled down to private life. Queenie must be getting quite along now—she was real gray around the muzzle when I first met her, and that's all of eight or nine years ago. It was the season I played in 'Everyperson.' You didn't happen to see it, did you?"

Again the answer was negative.

"'Twas an awfully good sketch," continued the Comédienne, "sort of a morality play—like 'Everywoman,' you know. I played four parts in it and changed my clothes four times. I was *Society* in purple foulard and a blonde wig in the ballroom scene at the opening of the sketch. Then in the cabaret scene I played *Vice* in black spangles and a paradise feather, changing into a zouave jacket and Turkish trousers for the pantomime of the 'Twelve Temptations.' My next impersonation was a drunken woman who did a fall down a flight of eighteen steps in the opium-den scene—"

"Mercy!" interrupted the Ingénue, "didn't you hurt yourself?"

"That's the art of it," said the Comédienne with a barely perceptible hint of patronage in her tone. "Then I did the shrieks behind the scene when the betrayed girl was flung off Brooklyn Bridge, and I finished off as the upper left-hand angel in the 'Mother, Home and Heaven' tableau at the end of the sketch."

She paused to meditate pleasantly on past triumphs.

THE Ingénue waited a moment—then suggested: "The kangaroo—was it in the same sketch?"

"Oh, no! But she was the headliner of a bill we played on four weeks—the Interurban Circuit out in New England. That prejudiced me against her, to start with. Heaven knows I am far from being a fussy woman, but after twenty years in the business, it certainly is galling to see your name on the bills in

letters so small you have to put on your reading-glasses to find it, and a boxing kangaroo featured as if she were Sarah Bernhardt and Eva Tanguay rolled into one.

"I went to the theater the first day with a chip on my shoulder, and if I'd found that animal had been put in the star dressing-room I was prepared to express myself in suitable terms. But she wasn't. The ladies of our act had Room Number One, and Queenie was next door in a room just as nice as ours, but not having so many clothes-hooks nor a pier-glass, neither of which would be particularly necessary to a kangaroo.

"We were all more or less afraid of her at first, but Mr. Evans, her keeper, having seen us dodge every time we passed, explained that whatever they might be in a wild state, Queenie was as gentle as a dove.

"Mr. Evans was an awfully pleasant, nice-mannered young man—not in the least what you'd expect an animal-trainer to be. To see him sitting quietly in Queenie's dressing-room reading while waiting for their turn to come, you'd have thought he was some young college-professor strayed into the theater by accident. He was never without a book in his hand, and it was through trying to borrow something to read that I found out what his hobby was. Eugenics! They'd just begun to come in, and he'd been converted the first crack out of the box. 'The salvation of the race,' was what he said about 'em, and he tried to lend me a couple of books to prove it, but I didn't take 'em. Scientific books can't hold me, somehow. They don't seem to have enough plot.

"The affection Mr. Evans showed for Queenie and the affection she showed for him were wonderful. And the care he took of her—though Queenie's best friend could not have truthfully called her anything but very, very plain. She was about the size of a small cab-horse, but nothing like so good a figure—too narrow-chested for the width of her hips. And there was something unpleasantly bare and ratty-looking about her tail. But then, very few people are perfect if you stop to analyze their beauty. Her

MARY ELLEN AND THE MARSUPIAL MAMMAL 1095

fur was her best point—seal brown and sleek, with a waistcoat of a little lighter shade, and just south of her equator a cunning little pocket, so natural you expected her to put in her paw and take out her handkerchief any minute.

"She was the most human animal I've ever met, probably the result of being brought up entirely with people and never associating with other kangaroos. She'd pick things up in her paws like an overgrown squirrel, and turn 'em over and over and then look into your face with an expression that said 'What is it?' so plain you'd be tempted to explain to her in words of one syllable on the chance she'd understand. She was like a baby about bright-colored things, and as for anything that glittered, she just couldn't keep her paws off."

"Was she clever?" asked the Ingénue. "On the stage, I mean."

The Comédienne shook her head. "No more dramatic instinct than a last year's bird's nest. It was Mr. Evans that put the act over. When the curtain went up, he'd come down to the footlights and deliver a little speech about Queenie's nature and habits, starting in like this:

"This magnificent specimen of the marsupial mammal—"

"Excuse me," interrupted the Ingénue, "—this what?"

"Marsupial mammal," repeated the Comédienne obligingly. "It means carrying their young in their pockets."

"Oh, yes," said the Ingénue. "I'd forgotten they did."

"I'd not only forgotten they did, but I'd never have remembered it by that name, never in the living world,

only Mr. Evans explained it. Well, anyway, when he'd finished his little speech, he'd whistle, and Queenie'd waddle on from the first entrance and make a bow that looked like a mud-scow adrift in a hurricane. Then he'd tie her boxing-gloves onto her, and they'd go to it. Of course, she couldn't really box; she'd just flop her paws at him in a clumsy sort of way, but he had an awfully entertaining line of talk and did some funny falls when Queenie hit him, by any miracle, and so he kept the act going for ten minutes.

"WELL, as I said before, we 'Every-person' actors didn't like it any too well, having Queenie billed over us; still, we couldn't help it and we were glad to be working; so we just settled down and made the best of it. But there was one turn on the bill that couldn't seem to get reconciled. It was Yolande Montgomery, the Peerless International Song Favorite. Don't suppose you ever heard of her. Her hit was made long before your time, but she couldn't realize that she was ancient history. She couldn't

understand why her name wasn't on a Broadway electric sign instead of third from the top on the Interurban Circuit. She kept her hair just as blonde and her cheeks just as pink as they were, and I suppose she looked just the same to herself, but she didn't look the same to the managers or the public.

"Her experiences had soured her, and Queenie's being headlined was the last bitter drop that curdled her whole system. The very first show, she stood in the wings and watched



"She was the most human animal I've ever met, probably the result of being brought up entirely with people and never associating with other kangaroos."

the boxing-act with an expression on her face that was nothing short of murderous. And what she said about the act later! Well, if kangaroos are at all sensitive, Queenie's ears must have burned till the fur scorched.

"It made me blue to hear Yolande sing. She was so changed from what I remembered years before. Her voice was as shopworn as her reputation. Her figure was a 1900 model, and the smile all New York used to rave about was nothing but a tender memory and two false teeth. There was precious little left but her name and her diamonds. Back in her palmy days she'd been notorious for her jewelry, and she still had quite a lot of it. There was one ornament, a big diamond star, that press-agents had written themselves into writer's cramp about, ever since she got it by marrying—and divorcing—the Honorable Bertie Fitzgibbons. The center of the star was a canary diamond that'd been in the Fitzgibbons family for years. I think William the Conqueror wore it as a stickpin when he signed the Magna Charta or whatever it was he did. Anyway, now Yolande had it, and something like half a pint of miscellaneous loot to back it up, making quite a display for the Small Time.

"Yolande carried a velvet drop-curtain and her own accompanist, and when she swept on the stage and leaned against the grand piano, glittering like the back of an ice-wagon, she certainly made some flash. But the flash was all. She sang four songs,—five, if urged even slightly,—changing her dress for each one; but by the time she showed 'em her clothes and her jewelry, it was cold. Yes," said the Comédienne pensively, "the Peerless International Song Favorite's act would have died standing up if it hadn't been for Mary Ellen."

"Mary Ellen?" chirped the Ingénue.

"Yes, Mary Ellen Gilchrist—Yolande's accompanist—a slip of a girl of eighteen or nineteen Yolande'd picked up in New York because she was cheap. My goodness, what that child could do to a piano! She made Yolande's voice sound almost human at times by the clever way she'd manag'd the accompaniment, featuring what notes were left that were

any good, and drowning out the worst. But where she really shone was in the interludes when Yolande was changing her costumes. There was one imitation of a hurdygurdy she played that was so real you could almost smell the smell of warm asphalt pavement that floats in the windows in New York, hot days when the hurdygurdies are out full force.

"Yolande made her changes in the first entrance, with one eye on her buttons and buttonholes, and the other eye on what Mary Ellen was doing on the stage, and both ears on how the audience was taking it. They invariably took it well, and when the Peerless International Song Favorite used to listen to the applause her accompanist got, the expression in her Peerless International eyes was nothing short of reptilian.

"But day after day and night after night, when the act was over, poor little Mary Ellen had to stand up and let Yolande tell her what a villainous pianiste she was. Nothing was ever right. The accompaniments were too loud or too soft or too fast or too slow—no matter what Mary Ellen did or didn't do, she had ruined the act! According to Yolande, the poor child could barely qualify to play a hand-organ satisfactorily. And she never made the slightest effort to spare the girl's feelings. The more performers and stage-hands there were standing around, the harder she'd jump.

"Once several of us were standing in the wings when Yolande's act finished, and she could hardly wait to make her bow, she was so anxious to sink her fangs into Mary Ellen.

"See here," she snapped, and her tone was fairly wire-edged with meanness and jealousy, 'what do you mean by playing my last number half a tone higher than it's written?'

"Poor Mary Ellen looked half scared to death. I suppose if she'd had a chance she'd have said she didn't, but the Peerless International hopped on her like a pigeon on a June-bug.

"Don't contradict me! You played it in B flat!"

"By the expression on Mary Ellen's face she was probably going to say that whatever key she played it in she was

sorry and willing to apologize, but she didn't get a chance to, for Yolande cut her off again with:

"I'm not going to argue with you; but don't let it happen again.' And she added extra sneerily: 'Remember, you don't know all there is to know about music, even if you did play the piano six months in a five-and-ten-cent store!' And if she'd said Mary Ellen'd played the piano in the lowest den of infamy, she couldn't have said it in a more insulting way. Right there it seemed to me time to try to distract her mind.

"How's the audience, Miss Montgomery?" I asked her.

"Disgusting!" she answered as prompt as a snapping-turtle and pretty near as pleasant. 'Though I don't expect appreciation out in these dreadful little towns. My act is miles over their heads. I can't think why my agent booked me in theaters of this class. He knows how I loathe them!"

"I might have said that as she hadn't worked for a year and a half, to my certain knowledge, perhaps that was the reason; but I restrained my natural instincts, and she went on:

"Of course, I suppose you don't mind, when you're used to them.' And she gave me a pitying glance that classified me as a poor worm, born and brought up on the Small Time. 'Vaudeville at its best is loathsome to me, but this—*this*'—and she gave a very theatrical shudder—'is unspeakable! And it isn't alone the audiences; it's the horrible class of people you have to associate with!' Right there she brought her pleasant little chat to a close with a horrified snort. I followed the direction of her eye, and there, in the first entrance, stood Mary Ellen tickling the boxing kangaroo under the chin. They were smiling into each other's faces like sisters, and Mr. Evans completed the tableau, pleased as a young mother showing off Baby's first tooth.

"The Peerless International Song Favorite's voice sounded like a rusty buzz-saw striking a knot as she said:

"Miss Gilchrist! Poor Mary Ellen jumped a foot. 'Miss Gilchrist, kindly take my costumes to the dressing-room!' Mary Ellen started to obey, but the

other woman saw a chance to be even nastier. 'No, on second thoughts, I'll take them myself. Don't go near them after touching that filthy animal! In fact, you can send out for some disinfectant and use it before I'll even allow you to come into the dressing-room.' Then with a withering glance at Queenie: 'The horrible creatures are so apt to be verminous!' And off she went with her nose at an angle of ninety degrees.

"Insulting Mr. Evans' kangaroo was like insulting his kinfolk, and it was all we could do to keep him from following her and demanding an apology. The only thing that hindered him was that if he did, Yolande'd take it out on Mary Ellen in the long run.

"She felt terribly about it—cried like a baby while she was waiting for the disinfectant. That was really how she and I came to get so well acquainted later. You know how it breaks the ice to have some one cry on your bosom.

"MARY ELLEN never was much of a talker, especially about herself, but gradually, as we got friendly, I found out she was an orphan with a little sister she was trying to keep out of the asylum. She'd been through all the ill-paid purgatories that are waiting for girls with livings to earn, and the twenty dollars a week Yolande paid her looked like untold gold.

"Over and over again I told her she was worth fifty dollars if she was worth a cent, that she was the real hit of the act and that she didn't have to stand anybody's cussedness a minute, for nine chances in ten Yolande would get her time canceled if Mary Ellen left, and what's more, Yolande knew it. But Mary Ellen wouldn't believe it.

"You only think I'm so clever because you like me,' she'd say. 'It isn't really true.'

"She was too timid to make many friends. For quite a while the only ones on the bill she seemed to feel easy and comfortable with were me and the kangaroo. She was crazy about old Queenie—used to slip into the theater every morning on the quiet and bring a little lettuce or a hard-boiled egg or a couple

of stalks of asparagus—whatever she thought would tempt a kangaroo's appetite. Queenie got so that when she heard the girl's voice she'd scuttle around inside her dressing-room like mad, so anxious to see her.

"The next thing I noticed was that Mr. Evans began to show up around the theater mornings too. Along about eleven, when I'd go after my mail, there he'd be, rehearsing Queenie or giving her a bath or a manicure—anything for an excuse to hang around. Then several times during performances I caught him watching Mary Ellen with a palpitating sort of look that seemed very significant to me.

"I was awfully pleased. My congratulations were all ready. I'd even given some thought to the question of a wedding-present. But somehow nothing happened. The time slipped along, and it got to be the last week of the Interurban Circuit. After that, Queenie was booked South, and Yolande's route took her West. My worst enemy has never been able to call me snoopy, but I *do* like to know what's going on, and in this case, I made up my mind to find out.

"I tried Mary Ellen first. I spoke about Mr. Evans, just casually but watching her very sharp, and said what a nice-appearing young fellow he was. She blushed up to the roots of her hair. Then I mentioned what a pity it was that in two or three days we'd all be separated and no knowing whether we'd ever meet again. The look on her face

was like a cloud coming over the sun. Then I went on about what a fine husband he'd make, and didn't she think so? Her eyes shone as if somebody'd pointed

out the gates of Paradise. To make sure, I asked her if she thought there was any truth in the rumor that he was engaged to a girl back in Australia. Believe me, if Mary Ellen'd had a dagger in her hand, I wouldn't have trusted her alone with that imaginary fiancée a minute.

"So there I was, sure of one thing. Whatever was wrong between 'em wasn't on her side of the fence. When I went after him I started about the same way and with pretty much the same results, but all the time I had a feeling there was something he was keeping back; so I went on prodding around in his

mind, and finally it came to the surface.

"'Awful how much she has to stand from Yolande,' I said, and his fingers clenched when he answered, 'Yes,' very short.

"I felt exactly like one of those psychological detectives following up a trail, when I went on:

"'Nobody but an angel could put up with it.'

"'Nobody but a coward *would* put up with it!' And the way he said it told me I'd hit the root of the trouble.

"'She has to keep her job,' I said.

"'She can't and keep her self-respect!' he came back at me.

"I hadn't any really good answer to that, not on the spur of the moment;



"Yolande Montgomery, the Peerless International Song Favorite. . . . She kept her hair just as blonde and her cheeks just as pink as they were, and I suppose she looked just the same to herself, but she didn't look the same to the managers or the public."

so I just asked: 'What would you advise her to do?'

"Demand to be treated with common decency!"

"But she don't dare to!" I told him.

"I know she don't!" he answered miserably.

"Well, that isn't criminal!" I said pretty sharply, getting a little out of patience.

"Do you know what's at the bottom of half the trouble in the world?" he asked very seriously. 'Cowardice! It makes hypocrites and liars and swindlers and thieves! Why, I wouldn't bring cowardice into my family and hand it down to my children any more than I would drunkenness or tuberculosis or St. Vitus' dance!'

"There it was! He was applying his eugenics to Mary Ellen, and it didn't work out right. At first I was awfully provoked—it seemed so silly; but he looked so wretched that I was convinced that, right or wrong, he was in deadly earnest; and I went off to my dressing-room puzzling my brains for some way of straightening things out. But I needn't have worried. Providence was on the job!

"OUR act was over when the alarm came. The World's Foremost Female Cornetist was on the stage, and I was standing in the wings, still in my make-up and my angel's robe, watching her. When she was about halfway through the 'Poet and Peasant' overture, there was a place where she had three or four bars' rest while the orchestra went on playing, and I noticed that instead of emptying the water out of her cornet in the dainty, ladylike way she generally did, she threw up her head and sort of sniffed. And when she backed over toward the exit, very shrinking and modest at the end of the selection, she said in a nervous whisper:

"Don't you smell smoke?"

"I said: 'No, I don't. Do you?' Almost before the words were off my lips, it happened. There was a low, dull sort of an explosion, and through the door leading from the auditorium of the theater into the cut-rate drug-store next door came a puff of smoke.

"The first thing that flashed into my mind was my garnet earrings, and I recollect running over several people on my way to the dressing-room to save them. Then the next thing I remember is standing in the little park across the street, watching the fire-department swarm into the theater, and in one hand I had a pair of pink silk stockings, not mates, and in the other a curly blonde switch belonging to the soubrette of our act. To this day I have never been able to recollect wrapping the earrings up in an old undervest and putting them behind the steam-pipes—which is where I found them later.

"Most of the performers were with me, some in costume and make-up and some in even less, and we attracted as much attention as the fire did, especially the Peerless International Song Favorite, who had a fit of hysterics in a flower-bed.

"When I got myself together enough to notice, I figured out that we were all there except Mary Ellen, Mr. Evans and Queenie, and by that time we knew there wasn't any danger, and so I didn't worry about them.

"The fire didn't amount to anything at all. The drug-store man had been experimenting with some invention—new kind of hair-tonic, he said, though it seemed to me sort of sensational for a hair-tonic. Anyway, it blew up and burned his eyebrows and most of his whiskers off, but didn't do much other damage—just enough to give him an excuse for a fire-sale. He seemed very cheerful, though singed.

"Luckily nobody'd been hurt in the rush the audience made for the doors, and the theater wasn't damaged at all—hardly even smoky; and so the manager decided to finish the performance rather than give the audience their money back. Before the engines left, he waddled out and told us to hurry back and go on with the show. So we all gathered our shattered nervous systems together and started—all but Yolande. She lingered to get in a final word or two with a reporter, hoping to be specially mentioned in his account of the fire.

"Of course, I suppose a kangaroo couldn't really turn pale, but the minute

my eyes lit on Queenie, I got the impression that she was far from a well animal. She was leaning up against the back fence of the theater in a feeble sort of way; Mary Ellen was trembling like a leaf, and Mr. Evans was patting her hand and saying "There, there!" in that helpless way men do when they try to be soothing.

"What do you think!" he called excitedly. "I was down in the basement having a smoke when the fire broke out, and didn't hear a thing. Queenie was shut in all alone, and Miss Gilchrist knew it! Instead of saving herself, she broke the padlock on my dressing-room door with an ax and turned Queenie loose! She risked her life to save that kangaroo!"

"Oh, there wasn't any danger," Mary Ellen said, awfully pink and pleased.

"Well, you didn't know that! The idea's the same!" And Mr. Evans looked at me as triumphant as if I'd been the one to call the girl a coward.

"Poor Queenie! She looks very upset," said the World's Foremost Female Cornetist sympathetically.

"She is," agreed Mr. Evans. "She was so scared when I got there that she was tearing up and down the hall in a nervous lather, and Miss Gilchrist couldn't do a thing with her. She wouldn't even come when I called. Finally I chased her into Miss Montgomery's dressing-room and shut her in while I got her a carrot to calm herself with. Murder! Wouldn't there be a call for the Health Department if she ever knew Queenie'd been in her room!"

"Everybody laughed, Yolande being just as popular as so much deadly poison, and Mary Ellen's laugh was as cheerful and chipper as anybody's. But it stopped as if it'd been turned off at the faucet when Yolande herself swept around the corner of the building. She took us all in at a glance, and then she said 'Miss Gilchrist!' in a tone that made even Queenie cringe. The smile slid off Mary Ellen as if her face had been slippery. Have you ever noticed a cowed dog when its master cracks the whip? That was Mary Ellen as she said, 'Yes, Miss Montgomery,' and edged through the stage door.

"Mr. Evans looked as if some one had thrown cold water in his face, but he didn't say a word.

"JUST then the orchestra started up an overture inside, and the stage-manager came hurrying out and said the World's Foremost Female Cornetist would start her act right in the middle where she left off.

"The rest of 'em hustled into the theater, but I stayed behind a minute with Queenie and her master.

"Can you beat it!" he said savagely, when the others were out of earshot. "She's got the physical courage to take her life in her hand to save a dumb brute, and yet she's such a moral coward she lets that old catamaran use her for a doormat with the *Welcome* side up!"

"Whatever his feelings were, he didn't have a minute to brood over 'em, there being only barely time to get ready for his act. Queenie didn't act natural at all while she was being hurried into her collar and tie—sort of hunched herself up, languid and indifferent; but Mr. Evans thought she was still preoccupied about the fire and would forget it when she got on the stage. But she didn't.

"From the very jump she laid down on the act. When Mr. Evans gave her the whistle that was her cue to amble on, she never budged. Just looked at him as if she'd never seen him before and didn't care in the least if she never saw him again. He came over and took her by the collar and lugged her bodily out onto the stage; and believe me, it was some lug. A reluctant kangaroo makes an awfully poor companion for a stroll. There was a worried look on Mr. Evans' face when he was tying Queenie's boxing-gloves on. He tried to carry it off with some impromptu comedy, but there wasn't any comedy left in his system when he thoroughly realized Queenie's attitude toward the afternoon's entertainment. When he squared off and gave her a gentle poke in the sirloin, instead of coming back at him she gave a fretful grunt and backed off. He followed her up and gave her a little tap on the jaw, but she just gave him a 'Why do you persecute me?' look and edged away.

MARY ELLEN AND THE MARSUPIAL MAMMAL 1101

"The audience was getting restless, and Mr. Evans was getting desperate. Usually he was as gentle with Queenie as if she'd been his firstborn child, but her stubbornness and the excitement of the afternoon were getting on his nerves, and he hauled off and landed a good jab just below her floating ribs. He said afterwards that his idea was to provoke her into fighting back. But she didn't. An anguished look came over her face; she let out a feeble sort of bleat, clapped both paws over her middle distance and lay down on the floor, curled up like a sick kitten on a hot brick.

"I heard a fat old lady in the front row say something about cruelty to animals, and an indignant murmur ran over the whole audience; but it changed to a sympathetic whisper when Mr. Evans ran to Queenie and went down

on his knees to lift up her head. It made quite a touching picture as the stage-manager rang the curtain down.

"MR. EVANS was crazy. He gave a stage-hand two dollars to run for the best doctor in town and bring him, dead or alive, in a cab. It took the policeman,—he happened to be behind the scenes on account of the fire,—the electrician, the trick bicyclist and the whole troupe of Japanese acrobats to get Queenie to her dressing-room, grunting pitifully at every step, and then she lay on the floor, helpless as a baby, with her head in Mary Ellen's lap and Mr. Evans fanning her with a newspaper.

"It takes an emergency like that to make you realize how helpless you are. There was that poor sick thing with fifteen or twenty of us standing around,



"The doctor never seemed to give a thought to how much he'd hurt the poor animal. He just smiled blandly and said, 'Appendicitis!' A sort of gasp ran around the circle, and he went on, very impressively: 'Nothing but an immediate operation will save the patient's life!'"

and not a soul had more than the vaguest idea what to do. The Female Cornetist had some strong smelling-salts in her room, and she brought 'em. Said she had an idea Queenie was just faint. Mr. Evans took 'em excitedly and held 'em under the patient's muzzle, full strength. She sniffed one good sniff and then blatted like a lost soul. The comedy bicyclist said he had an aunt who was subject to exactly the same kind of spells, and ice on her head was the only thing that brought her out of 'em. Luckily there was plenty of ice in the cooler, so we rubbed its forehead with it. The Three Sisters Trevellyan brought their hot-water bottle with a pink crocheted cover their mother had made to keep it from burning you, and we put it where Queenie seemed to ache most. But nothing seemed to relieve her till I thought of my Battery—I have it for my rheumatism. So we strapped one electrode onto Queenie's left hind ankle and put the little metal handle into her right front paw and her other foot in a pail of water and turned on the current. I don't know that it really gave her any relief, but it surprised her and took her mind off her sufferings. She was livelier when the doctor arrived.

"At first he didn't take kindly to the idea of diagnosing a kangaroo, but when Mr. Evans waved a twenty-dollar bill very suggestively, he put his little black bag right down and started in. He was a young doctor but very painstaking and thorough. Queenie came near swallowing the thermometer, but he finally got around that by tying a string to it. He'd gone over her inch by inch as far down as her waist and hadn't found a thing wrong except one small adenoid and slight symptoms of eyestrain, and then to make room for further investigations, he moved the hot-water bottle.

"The groan Queenie gave would have told a blind man that he'd uncovered the seat of the trouble. The doctor said 'Aha!' very triumphantly and looked as pleased as a bloodhound picking up a fresh scent. Then he concentrated on Queenie's embonpoint. First he stirred it gently round and round like stirring clothes in a wash-boiler. Queenie

squirmed feebly and tried to get away. The doctor said 'Local inflammation,' and shook his head. Then he went over the same locality again, tapping lightly, like a pianist showing off his staccato execution, with Queenie wincing at every note. When he got through the selection he shook his head and said, 'Very distended!'

"Then he sort of measured with his thumb as if he were a surveyor planning to lay Queenie's abdomen out in building-lots. When he'd apparently decided on a choice site, he suddenly put his finger on it and then leaned on the finger. By comparison, any sound that Queenie'd ever let out before faded into dead silence. But the doctor never seemed to give a thought to how much he'd hurt the poor animal. He just smiled blandly and said, 'Appendicitis!'

"A sort of gasp ran around the circle, and he went on, very impressively: 'Nothing but an immediate operation will save the patient's life!'

"YOU know the ghastly pause that comes when anybody's broken bad news. Well, it settled on us for a second—but only for a second; for the silence was shattered by a sudden shriek from the next dressing-room. It was Yolande's voice raised to a point that would have punctured a tire.

"'My diamonds! My diamonds!' And then another scream that touched A above high C and finished with an explosion of colored fire like a skyrocket.

"The alarm was so sudden and so electric that everybody ran, even Mr. Evans and the doctor—everybody but Mary Ellen.

"When we got to the next dressing-room, the Peerless International Song Favorite was revolving rapidly on her own axis like a cyclone. She was snatching things off the dressing-shelves as fast as she could snatch, and dumping them on the floor. Then she tore the bureau-covers off the shelves and searched, and then took up the newspapers underneath and searched. If there'd been paint on the shelves she'd have had that off and looked under it, and all the while she kept repeating, 'My diamonds! My diamonds!'

"Of course we all commenced to ask her whether she was sure she hadn't left 'em at the hotel, and when was the last she'd seen of 'em, and whether she hadn't put 'em somewhere and forgotten 'em—all the imbecile questions you do ask in such a case.

"I'd taken them off after my act and was getting ready to dress for the street. I remember laying them here on the shelf! The alarm of fire came and then—"

"Yes—then?" we all said, breathless.

"Then I ran—just as the rest of you did. And I left the diamonds. I never remembered them till this minute!" She stopped suddenly as if something had just struck her, and her eyes narrowed down to two mean little streaks.

"Miss Gilchrist was here—and I left the diamonds!" she said significantly.

"What d' you mean?" asked the trick bicyclist.

"What I said, fool!" She turned on him so savagely that he bit his tongue trying to get his mouth shut. Then she went on with a rush: "Where is she?"

"See here, you don't think—" Mr. Evans began, but Yolande didn't stop to hear. She swept out of her dressing-room into the next room, and the rest of us followed like the tail of a comet. There was Mary Ellen, just as we'd left her, holding the old kangaroo's paw.

"She was too sick to be left alone," she said apologetically. "Is—is something the matter?"

"Yolande didn't waste a second in preliminaries.

"What have you done with them?" she demanded.

"Done with what?"

"That's enough, Miss Innocence!"

Yolande's tone was vicious. "Policeman! I charge this girl with the theft of my jewels! Arrest her!"

"Don't you stir a step!" This came from Mr. Evans.

"The Peerless International Song Favorite went right on as if nobody'd spoken.

"You didn't leave the building with the rest of us! I suppose you thought it was worth taking some risk to make as big a haul as my jewelry. Come! Where are they? You haven't had time to get rid of them."

"DID you ever see a half-starved kitten swell up suddenly before your eyes and turn into a royal Bengal tiger? I don't suppose you did. I never did myself. But I saw something just as wonderful happen

to Mary Ellen when she realized what the other woman meant.

"Her back stiffened up like a broomstick, and a blazing patch of color flamed into each cheek. Fear was wiped off her face as you'd wipe a word from a slate, and *fight* was written in its place as plain as print. Without one second's hesitation she walked straight up to Yolande, and standing there, eye to eye, she said in a voice that I hardly recognized:

"You horrible old woman, how dare you call me a thief!"

"Yolande gasped, part in astonishment at the unexpected attitude, and part in



"That's enough, Miss Innocence!" Yolande's tone was vicious. "Policeman! I charge this girl with the theft of my jewels! Arrest her!"

rage at being called a horrible old woman.

"'Miss Gilchrist—' she began in the tone that had always reduced Mary Ellen to a pulp. But it didn't work this time. The girl broke in in that strange new voice:

"'I haven't seen your diamonds since you took them off—and if I had, what would I want with them?'

"'What would you want with them!' Yolande laughed a laugh that was just as pleasant and genial as the clatter of handcuffs. She turned to us: 'What would she want with ten thousand dollars' worth of diamonds that she could turn into cash at a moment's notice!'

"'Be still!' And the way Mary Ellen spoke those two words scared even me. 'Be still before I make you! Now listen! I've done a lot for money! I'm ashamed to think how much! I've praised your cracked old tin horn of a voice, and I've smiled into your malicious old painted face! I've slaved and crawled and truckled to you for your miserable twenty dollars a week! The need of money has made me a hypocrite and a sneak, but it'll take more than the need of money to make me a thief!'

"We were all so astonished that for a second we 'held the picture' as if it were the curtain of a blood-and-thunder thriller. Then Mr. Evans broke it.

"'Mary Ellen!' was all he said, but I could tell that he was thanking God on his knees because she'd gotten up the spunk to call her soul her own.

"It must have been the emotional tension in his voice that startled Queenie. Anyway, she fetched loose a moan that was just the essence of distress. I happened to be nearest, and instinctively I put out my hand and said, 'Sh, Queenie, sh!' without looking, intending to pat her and keep her quiet. I shall never forget

my emotions when my hand lighted on a lump as big as a cocoanut right in the pit of her stomach. It startled me so that I said—low but very tense: 'Good Lord, what's that?' And the doctor, swelling up with professional pride as if the lump was a personal tribute to him, said:

"'That, madam, is the movable mass produced by congestion of the crest of the ilium, upon which I base my diagnosis of appendicitis!'—or words to that effect.

"To my dying day I shall never know what possessed me to do it, being the last person in the world to take liberties, even with my intimates, which that kangaroo and I never were; but without saying by your leave or with your leave, I slipped my hand into her pocket."

"And what did you find?" gasped the Ingénue.

"The diamonds, of course," replied the Comédienne. "Queenie'd nabbed 'em while she was shut up in Yolande's dressing-room during the fire. You know I told you how crazy she was about anything that glittered. And if the points of the star hadn't gouged her into what looked like appendicitis, Heaven knows when they'd have come to light. Mary Ellen might have been arrested, and almost anything might have happened.

"Wasn't it all providential! You see it needed something sensational like that afternoon's happenings to give Mary Ellen a chance to prove that both physically and morally she was gritty as a sand-pile—though after they were married, Mr. Evans told me that in spite of eugenics and everything, he was so crazy about her he'd have had to marry her if she'd been the biggest coward that ever wore a yellow streak."

"Overture!" intoned the call-boy outside the dressing-room door.



ILLUS-
TRATED
BY J. J.
GOULD



A Boost For Jimmy Cranford

By
William
Almon
Wolff

JIMMY CRANFORD, walked east from Broadway along the narrow, cañonlike street. He didn't have the fresh, springy step of youth, as young men in the financial district ought to have if they have reacted properly to the stimulus of treading the sacred flagstones that have been spurned by the feet of countless millionaires. Jimmy was young enough, but that was about the only way in which he did measure up to the specifications. He wasn't particularly alert, and he wasn't cheerful at all. And when he was opposite a white building, flaunting the wealth of its owners by rising only two

stories from the priceless ground upon which it was built, he stopped and scowled, regarding it morosely.

He could have told you a good deal about that building, but the chances are that you wouldn't have had to go to him for information. You would have known, as soon as you saw the modest legend in raised brass letters that proclaimed that this was the business home of Kennert Kane and Sons, about all that he could have told you. You would have known that Kennert Kane and Sons was of that small group of the real financial pillars of the nation; you would have known that great and important people, when

they wanted loans, were just as unassuming and deferential, once they passed that impressive portal, as the average man is when he drops in to talk to the cashier of his bank about getting a five-hundred-dollar note renewed. Governments sought the aid of Kennert Kane and Sons when they wanted money; railroads and great corporations of all sorts took business there. When Kennert Kane and Sons gave the word, vast stretches of new territory, in all the odd corners of the world, were opened up for settlement and development; rubber forests were made to yield their riches; the bowels of the earth were torn asunder to disgorge gold and silver and precious stones; rivers were bridged; mountains were tunneled; ships were built that plowed the farthest of the Seven Seas.

JIMMY CRANFORD went in and hung up his hat in the place provided for it, and sat down at a mahogany desk that was a lot more imposing than he was, and sneaked a furtive, unhappy sort of look at the clock. Half-past one! Jimmy groaned—inwardly. He went out for lunch as late as he could, but always, when he came back and looked at the clock, he opened up an arid, endless vista of drab afternoon—not that he was a shirker; Jimmy would never have thought about the clock at all, if he had felt that he was a real part of the tremendous organization that was living and breathing all about him. But to save his soul, he couldn't feel that.

Arthur Bradshaw came in just after Jimmy did and threw Jimmy a pleasant, absent-minded sort of smile as he hurried by on his way to his own room. Jimmy wasn't as clear in his mind as he might have been about Bradshaw's connection with Kennert Kane and Sons, Bankers, but he did know that Bradshaw, in sharp contrast to himself, mattered enormously.

"Hang it!" said Jimmy to himself. "He doesn't know who I am! He just grins at me that way because I'm sort of vaguely familiar to him, and he's the decent sort of chap to do it!"

And then a stenographer came along and wanted to know where some paper was, and Jimmy jumped up and went to the filing-cabinet and found it for her.

That was part of his job. He kept those files in order, and it seemed to him that it was a trifling, picayune, office-boy sort of job. It wasn't, altogether, but it really wasn't very inspiring.

He saw Bradshaw come out of his own room, smiling, and go to Mr. Marshall's door. Jimmy knew Mr. Marshall by sight, and that about let him out. There weren't any Kanes, any more, in Kennert Kane and Sons; Mr. Marshall was Kennert Kane and Sons.

Jimmy watched Bradshaw, and saw him open Mr. Marshall's door. And then Bradshaw stopped short, and laughed in his infectious way, and Jimmy heard him exclaim in pleased surprise. An extremely pretty and expensive-looking girl, with white fox furs doing their best, as it seemed, to swallow her up and hide her glowing, smiling face, came halfway out of the door, and stood talking to Bradshaw.

"It's all right, Arthur," Jimmy heard her say. And he frowned at something that was elusively familiar about her voice. "It's all right—I was just going. So you can go in and talk business to Dad."

And then, in spite of some laughing disclaimer from Bradshaw, she turned and came straight toward the rail that divided the real office from a sort of anteroom, and so straight toward Jimmy too. He was definitely sure, now, that he had heard her voice before—sure, indeed, that he had known this girl, or met her, at least. Obviously she was Mr. Marshall's daughter, and he searched his memory for some trace of a girl called Marshall. But before he had succeeded she was upon him, and she stopped short with a little cry of wonder.

"Why—Jimmy Cranford!" she cried, and held out her hand in the friendliest, frankest fashion. He got up very precipitately and took it. And then she colored and smiled and let the smile run into a laugh.

"Oh!" she said. "I never did call you Jimmy—except when I was talking about you! We were quite proper and formal, Mr. Cranford. And—you don't even remember me! But we did have some fun together at Dolly Martin's New Year party last year at Craigmoor."

And then, in a flash, he did remember her, and said so, incoherently apologetic, and clumsily eager to convince her that he hadn't forgotten her even for a moment—which was absurd, because it was so utterly futile. But she wasn't at all indignant, and she didn't pretend that she was; she was not that sort of girl. Indeed, she was so very much not that sort of girl that she pretended to believe him, and they just dropped the subject.

"And to think of finding you here, when everyone's been wondering what had become of you!" she said a moment later.

That brought him back to earth with a jolt. He'd been rather exalted; he'd completely forgotten, for a few delirious moments, his filing-cabinet and his gorgeous desk that it was so ridiculously easy to keep in order, and his general feeling of insignificance and ineptitude.

"I never dreamed of connecting you with Mr. Marshall!" he said clumsily.

"I should hope you wouldn't!" she said severely. "Not the one you see here in the office! Dad—why, he isn't my Dad at all, here! You've never seen him at home, Mr. Cranford. He's quite different there. He—he rather likes me, for one thing. And when I come to see him here, he just fidgets around and works secret buttons that I can't see, so that people like Arthur Bradshaw will come in, and he can pretend that it's about something enormously important, so that he can get rid of me."

She turned around, but she wasn't half as breathless as you would have expected her to be and as Jimmy was. She cried out delightedly and made a little clutch at Jimmy's arm.

"Look!" she said. "I've caught them this time! Arthur Bradshaw's coming out of Dad's room now! Now—how much important business do you suppose they've talked over in that jiffy? It was just a trick to get rid of me—and I was going, anyway!"

BRADSHAW came toward them, smiling. Jimmy felt a little uncomfortable, but that was quite unnecessary.

"I see you know Cranford," said Bradshaw as he came up to them. "I'll have to cultivate his acquaintance my-

self. He hasn't been here long enough for me to know him very well."

"You certainly will," said Miss Marshall—Jimmy had been searching his mind, and he seemed to remember that Dolly Martin had called her Eleanor. "You know perfectly well who he is; you were hoarse for two days after that game at New Haven two years ago that he won in the last few minutes—"

"Oh, I say—are you that Cranford—Jimmy Cranford?" said Bradshaw. "By Jove! Talk about entertaining angels unawares! Have lunch with me to-morrow, and we'll talk football. I never got to college myself, but I'm a good deal of a football enthusiast."

"I can't ask you to lunch very well—that's a man's prerogative," said Miss Marshall. "But I can have you for dinner—suppose we say Wednesday night? Yes—Wednesday night. Dolly Martin's coming, and I know she wants to see you, and find out all about you. So, if you don't mind short notice—"

Jimmy hesitated. He didn't see how he could refuse; he didn't want to refuse, for that matter; he'd have been something unpleasantly more than human if he had wanted to. So he said, of course, that he'd be very glad, and Miss Marshall seemed very well pleased indeed, and gave him her hand again, and Bradshaw went out to her car with her. And when he came back he stopped at Jimmy's desk and put his hand on his shoulder in a fashion that was extremely pleasant and not at all condescending.

"You know, none of us had any idea you were Jimmy Cranford!" he said. "It's all very well to hide your light under a bushel, and all that sort of thing, but—well, we'll have to find something a bit more exciting for you to do, after a while. Learning the ropes, aren't you? Good stuff! I started in as an office-boy here—"

"Look here, Mr. Bradshaw," said Jimmy, interrupting him. "I want you to get this thing straight. I haven't been hiding any light under a bushel, because—well, there isn't any light to hide. Miss Marshall may have said something about my having dropped out—well, I did, because I had to. There was one grand smash in my affairs, and I'm just

about as interested in what the cashier hands me on Saturdays as anyone in the office can be—"

"Why, I didn't know anything about that," said Bradshaw. "And so I wasn't thinking about it, of course. But I've got an idea, you see, that any man who could play football the way you used to must have pretty good stuff in him—the sort of stuff we're always looking for here. I did make rather an ass of myself that day at New Haven. But it wasn't the long run you made for the last touchdown that stirred me up; it was the way you got the team going, after you went in."

NOTHING much more was said then.

But Jimmy was conscious, inevitably, of a difference in the office. More attention was paid to him; Bradshaw made a point of stopping to speak to him often; and of course, after he had dined at the Marshalls' on Wednesday, Mr. Marshall knew him and nodded to him or occasionally spoke to him. That dinner at the Marshalls' was rather epoch-making, in a way. Jimmy had been pretty well starved for the sort of thing he got there in overflowing measure. It was a small and quite simple and ordinary dinner, but it stood out tremendously in Jimmy's life just then. For Eleanor Marshall went out of her way to be conspicuously nice to him.

She and he had paired off at one of Dolly Martin's winter house-parties at Cragmoor, as a man and a girl do sometimes. For one reason and another they'd been thrown together a good deal, and they had liked one another and talked themselves out. He'd been interested, decidedly. But then, not long afterward, Jimmy's father had died and he had been suddenly made aware of the way things had been going, and of the fact that he would have to fend for himself. Jimmy had never consciously planned to be an idler; he had always meant to do something. But he hadn't been anywhere near the point of deciding upon a career, and the crisis had taken him unawares. He had come up sharply, for the first time, against the imminence of life. And the ultimate result—or at least, it had seemed ultimate to him—had been his

job in the office of Kennert Kane and Sons.

He took Dolly Martin in at that dinner, but afterward he found himself more or less alone with Eleanor Marshall, and she wanted to know a good many things about him.

"I'm going to be bold and shameless," she said. "I gave myself away frightfully the other day when I blurted out your name the way I did! So I might as well admit that I did remember you, and think about you a lot, even if you didn't give me a thought after that party at Cragmoor broke up."

"Oh, but that isn't so!" he said eagerly. "I could tell you all sorts of things that happened there, and that we talked about. Only—well, you see, things went smash for me very soon after that, and I had a pretty rotten time."

"I know something of that," said Eleanor, nodding. "Do you want to tell me some more? I'm not just idly curious, really; I want to help, if I can—"

It was about the first chance he'd had to talk himself out since the smash. He wasn't the sort, you see, to take his troubles to his friends; he had preferred to cut himself utterly adrift. And so a good many things were corked up inside him, just waiting for a chance to get loose. She knew a good deal about him before he had done, and she nodded wisely and smiled.

"I don't think that's so bad, at all," she said. "It's been pretty hard on you, of course, but it may do a lot for you, in the end. Look at Arthur Bradshaw! He's a peach! Dad took a fancy to him when he was just a youngster there in the office, and he's come up awfully fast, because he had it in him to do it. I don't just mean, either, that he's made money—though he has, of course. But he's succeeded—he's made something big of his life. He's one of the men who count, already, and he's going to count a lot more in the next few years. And I don't see why you shouldn't do as well."

But Jimmy shook his head in a rather discouraged fashion.

"Afraid not," he said. "It doesn't seem to get hold of me, a little bit. Oh, I'm going to try, of course, but I don't think it's just my game."

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She turned around. "Look!" she said. "I've caught them this time! Arthur Bradshaw's coming out of Dad's room now! Now—how much important business do you suppose they've talked over in that jiffy? It was just a trick to get rid of me—and I was going, anyway!"

She frowned—looked a little puzzled. "I don't see how you can know about that yet," she said. "Anyhow, the main thing is to try. And you won't drop out again, will you? Now that we've found you, you're going to stay found? It was silly to disappear the way you did."

"I suppose it was," he admitted. And he laughed boyishly. "I certainly am glad you found me, Miss Marshall!"

AFTER all, it wasn't so very long before she was calling him Jimmy again, as she had done that day she came upon him in the office, and doing it without having to stop and apologize. Even if Jimmy had wanted to drop back into the obscurity in which she had found him, Eleanor wouldn't have let him do it. She liked him, quite frankly and obviously, and she was used to showing her likes and her dislikes without pretense or concealment.

Jimmy, it is true, was painfully conscious of the gulf that lay between him, an extremely junior clerk, at twenty dollars a week, in the employ of Mr. Marshall, and that same Mr. Marshall's daughter. But Eleanor made it hard for him to maintain that consciousness, because she herself ignored that gulf so absolutely.

When he was with her,—and she saw to it, in one way and another, that he was with her a good deal,—Jimmy didn't do much thinking, except about her. He was head over heels in love with her within a month; that was inevitable. And he had to keep himself sternly in hand to avoid telling her so in words; since she was certainly not dense, he told her so in other, but inarticulate, ways every time they met.

The effect of all this upon Jimmy in his working hours, at first, was salutary. He hadn't loafed before; if he had had that trick of looking furtively and unhappily at the clock, it had been simply because he so utterly lacked interest in what he was doing. And now, for a time, he turned in and took a forced, artificial sort of interest in his work and did it harder, if not better. The promotion that soon came to him he ascribed, justly, to Eleanor's influence. He didn't think she had asked it for him; he felt, rather,

and this was true, that Bradshaw, having found out who he was, had decided to see to it that he got a chance. So he got more money and more interesting work; and Bradshaw kept in pretty close touch with him—talked to him, day by day, about his work and about himself.

Jimmy wasn't blind. He could see just how decent Bradshaw was—because there couldn't be any doubt about Bradshaw's feelings where Eleanor was concerned. No man who was in love with her, as Jimmy definitely was, could be deceived about that, after seeing them together once or twice. It would have been pretty easy for Bradshaw to try to put a spoke in Jimmy's wheel. Not only did he not make any such attempt; it didn't seem to be in his mind that he might do so. So the stars in their courses seemed to be fighting for Jimmy: he had not only a real incentive, but an extraordinary opportunity, for making good.

But the plain fact is that he didn't do it, or even show signs of any ability to do it. For a time he was exalted and keyed up and enthusiastic. But it wasn't long before he slipped back into the same sort of discouragement that he had felt when Eleanor appeared upon the scene. He began again to feel insignificant and unimportant and hopeless.

Eleanor knew it—must have known it. She had a way of looking at him with narrowed, troubled eyes, when he wasn't conscious of her scrutiny, that revealed her concern very plainly indeed. She was, at this time, about as unhappy as Jimmy himself, which is saying a good deal.

IT was on a warm Saturday morning in August that she called Jimmy up, abruptly, just before noon.

"I'm just starting in to town, Jimmy," she said. "Can you get your golf things and meet me somewhere about half-past one? I'll drive you out, and we can play some golf and talk a bit."

"Half-past one—right!" he said.

He'd had other plans, but they went by the board quickly. He hadn't seen her for two or three weeks; she'd been away, visiting. Normally she'd have been very far away from New York at

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A BOOST FOR JIMMY CRANFORD

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that time of year, but what with the war and other things, including an approaching national election, Mr. Marshall wasn't indulging in any prolonged vacation, and she was keeping house for him, more or less sporadically, at their place on the Sound. And so Jimmy met her, and a few minutes later was sitting beside her in the low, swift roadster she usually drove, as she threaded her way skillfully through the heavy traffic of the half-holiday, in the northern portions of the city.

Eleanor was unusually silent as she drove, and Jimmy didn't feel disposed to talk much himself. Even though it was Saturday, there was no great crowd on the golf-course; a yacht-race had drawn nearly everyone away. And suddenly, on a high ridge that looked over the Sound, Eleanor stopped.

"Let's sit down and talk, Jimmy," she said. Her mouth was set; she looked unusually serious.

"Of 'shoes and ships and sealing-wax'?" he suggested. "Or 'cabbages and kings'?"

"I've been thinking about you, Jimmy," she said, ignoring that. "How is—everything? Are you—happier?"

"I'm as happy as the day is long—now that you're back," he said. "It's been—messy, with you away."

"Oh, don't!" she said. And then she drew in her breath sharply. "Jimmy, let's quit fencing! Did you mean that?"

He sat up abruptly, staring at her.

"Mean it!" he said. "Oh, my soul! You—do you want—"

"I want to know," she said steadily. "I don't care; I've got the right to know—"

"You know already—you must," he said bitterly. "Eleanor—what are you trying to do, dear? Don't you know I can't say what I want to—"

"You've got to, now," she said. "You've got to, Jimmy."

"Oh, I'll say it!" he cried. "I'll tell you that I'm mad for you—that I love you and want you—and that I know I can't have you."

"Ah!" she said. "That's what I wanted to hear, Jimmy! Now I can talk with you! Now I don't have to pretend that I don't know. . . . But Jimmy,

isn't it for me to say whether you can have me or not?"

He stared at her, bewildered, taken aback.

"But—you—and—I—" he said. "Oh, my dear—it won't do! You, with all you've got, and I—a failure!"

She got up suddenly, and stamped her foot, and stood looking at him with blazing eyes.

"But why should you be a failure?" she cried furiously. "Jimmy—you've got everything—every chance to succeed, every reason to want to succeed! Why—why—shouldn't you? Why are you so abject? Do you think money counts? It isn't what a man has; it's what he is and what he can do! Look at Arthur Bradshaw! He didn't have half your chance—and he's succeeded."

"I know," he said. "It—oh, it's just that it isn't in me, I think." He looked at her, wretchedly. "It's my own fault—it's up to me, not anyone else. I'm not whining. They've all tried to push me along."

"Oh!" she cried. For a moment it seemed that she was speechless, she was so angry. "Oh, that's it, Jimmy—but you don't see! It's because you're afraid of yourself—because you won't back yourself! It's because you've no confidence in yourself. That's what they say, what they've seen—Dad and Arthur Bradshaw and the others. They want you to make good, all of them—and it's not because I do! It's because they've seen that it is in you, if you'd only let it come out!"

SHE was silent for a moment, looking at him fixedly. And then, when she went on, she seemed to slump a little, and her voice was shaken by the tears that were in it.

"So now we've had it out, Jimmy!" she said wretchedly. "Oh, I can't be like other girls! I can't fold my hands and sit still and wait. I had to make you—make you say what you were fighting so hard not to say, so that I could say what I had to tell you! And now I've done it—oh, Jimmy—is it going to help? Is it going to do any good? Jimmy, I might as well have proposed to you and been done with it! I do care; I do want to say that you can have me—that you've

got to have me and take me, whether you will or not—"

"Eleanor!" he cried. He was roused at last; he caught her in his arms, suddenly, and held her, fiercely. His lips found hers; his cheeks were wet with her tears—tears that were coming now openly, unrestrained. . . . So for a moment they stood. And then, gently, she freed herself. He made no effort to hold her.

"Well, Jimmy?" she said in a low voice.

"Oh, I don't know—" he cried. "Eleanor, it isn't as if I hadn't tried! I have, my dear—I have! I've cared—I've wanted you—from the very first! Ever since that night at your house, after dinner! And for a little while it seemed to me that I could do anything—with you to think of, to hope for. But then—"

"You've got to find out, soon," she said. "We've both got to know, Jimmy. Because—oh, it's more than I can bear! Jimmy, it isn't whether you're poor or not that counts! I know how you would feel—but I wouldn't let that count. I'd give up everything to be with you, if that were all. But the rest—success—counting for something—"

"I know," he said grimly. "I—I'm going to try again. I'll show you—"

Suddenly she laughed. And the next moment she was smiling, and her eyes were as bright as if they had never been dimmed by her tears. She laid her hand on his shoulder in a caress that was infinitely appealing, infinitely thrilling.

"And now we're going to be sensible; we're going to stop being tragic, Jimmy!" she said. "And so—well—we don't want to play any golf, do we? Suppose we go back and have tea. But oh, Jimmy—hurry! Because—it's rather important for me to know."

FOR a while after that wonderful afternoon with Eleanor, Jimmy was satisfied to plunge into his daily work with an ardor so intense that it created an illusion of achievement. He had work to do now that was more important and significant; he knew that Bradshaw was responsible for that. He had a chance to make minor decisions, to assume a certain degree of responsibility. He was

getting a rather extraordinary insight into the workings of Kennert Kane and Sons; he knew that men who had been employed in that dignified white building for years had had no such opportunity as was his.

But the truth of it was that Jimmy simply couldn't take hold of things as he had the chance to do. Inhibitions that were maddeningly elusive restrained him when he was about to act on his own responsibility, and he went to Bradshaw, or to Mr. Marshall in rare cases, or to Sanderson, the office-manager, and put things up to them.

And rather abruptly, after a few weeks, he began to wonder if this friendliness, this effort to help him, didn't have something to do with his inability to grasp his chance. Wouldn't it be better for him if it were not so obvious that he was getting—not favors, exactly, perhaps, but a certain preference? He didn't know. But the thought was a disturbing one. It worked like yeast introduced into some mixture that does not call for such a leaven. . . .

And then, one day, the climax came. He went to Bradshaw's room, carrying some papers in his hand.

"I'm not sure about answering this letter from the Rio Cruces people," he began. "They want authority, you see, to spend another thousand in development-work on the three-hundred-foot level—"

"Eh?" said Bradshaw, looking up impatiently. He took the papers from Jimmy's hand. And then suddenly he slapped them down on his desk.

"Look here!" he said. "This wont do. I'm not supposed to load myself up with details. That's what you're for! You've got this letter to answer. It's been referred to you. Why the devil do you come to me with it?"

Jimmy stared at him.

"Because I'm not sure—" he began. "I was afraid I might make a mistake, and there'd be a loss to consider."

"Well?" said Bradshaw, his voice cutting like a knife. "What of it? Mistakes are going to be made. Do you expect to go through life without making any of 'em? Are you always going to see to it that you've got a goat for every-

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"Ah!" she said. "That's what I wanted to hear, Jimmy! Now I can talk with you! Now I don't have to pretend that I don't know But Jimmy, isn't it for me to say whether you can have me or not?"

thing that goes wrong—that you can pass the buck to some one else?”

Jimmy didn't answer. He was incredulous, aghast.

“I've told you this before, but I'll say it again,” said Bradshaw. “A big executive doesn't look for subordinates who never make mistakes, any more than an inventor with brains wastes his time trying for perpetual motion. He takes what he knows he can get—a subordinate who isn't afraid to take the chance of making a mistake, even if he knows he'll get hell for having made it. But you!”

There was scathing, bitter contempt in Bradshaw's voice now, and in his eyes. His lip was drawn back so that he was almost snarling.

“I'm about fed up with you, if you want to know it,” he went on scornfully. “I've made a fool of myself, boosting you, and talking about the way you'd make good when you found yourself. Well—you're one of my mistakes. I'm going to write you off. About this letter—you can tell them to go ahead, of course.”

He turned away, bent over work of his own again. And Jimmy, his flesh tingling, his cheeks hot, stood silent for a moment, fighting down the impulse to answer that scathing rebuke. In the end he turned without a word and walked from the room. He didn't see the way Bradshaw lifted his eyes to look after him, the way Bradshaw smiled.

THE memory of Bradshaw's outburst stayed in Jimmy's mind for the next week or two. And it was reinforced and made more urgent by changes, subtle, at first, but growing more and more pronounced, in his standing in the office. One by one, things that had been intrusted to him were turned over to others. He no longer had the daily opportunities that had been coming to him. Sanderson's manner changed as abruptly and as markedly as Bradshaw's had done; Jimmy even felt that there was something different in Mr. Marshall's treatment of him.

The whole situation had changed. Things weren't being made easy for him any more; he was getting difficult, thankless jobs now, instead of the easy and

interesting work that had been his portion. Even when he did his work properly,—and the curious thing was that he was really doing better work,—the results weren't showy. He himself couldn't even tell about his results.

Just at first, in this new order, Jimmy was discouraged. There were three or four days when he was on the verge of giving up, of resigning in disgust and ceasing to struggle. But then—unaccountably to himself—he got mad. He began to feel as he had done in the old football days, when everything was going wrong. He remembered that last game, the one at New Haven that Eleanor and Bradshaw had been talking about. His team had gone to pieces, and things had looked pretty black. Then a sort of Berserk rage had seized him; he had seen red, and he had hurled himself into the game, exulting in the obstacles that had lain between him and victory. He had had to fight his own team as well as the opposing eleven; his greatest obstacles had been not the opposing players but the ineptitude, the loss of the will to conquer, of his own men.

So now it was Bradshaw's sneering eyes, Sanderson's indifference, the reflection of their changed attitude that he could see and feel in those about him in the office, that daunted him at first and then aroused him to a new, grim sort of determination to succeed in spite of them. Eleanor noticed it—she had wilted, at first, when she felt his discouragement and the return of his despair.

He had little to say to her while the change was working in him. Indeed, he didn't see her often. He stayed away from her, and she reproached him for doing so.

“Sorry,” he said almost indifferently once. “But I was working something out. This game—well, it's not easy, but I'm going to beat it.”

“Ah!” she said quietly, mysteriously content. And then a little later: “Arthur Bradshaw doesn't seem to think you care much, Jimmy—”

“He doesn't know everything,” said Jimmy curtly. And then a sudden, twisted sort of jealousy flamed up in his

eyes. He had just thought of something. "Look here! You see a lot of him, don't you? D'you think—"

"Yes?" she said when he didn't go on.

"Nothing," said Jimmy. "It doesn't matter."

But it seemed to him that it did—only, he couldn't talk to her about it. After all, he didn't know that he blamed Bradshaw so much. The chances were that he knew something of how matters stood between them, between Jimmy and Eleanor. Jimmy was reasoning by analogy. He knew that he would know, without being told, if the situation were reversed. Suppose Bradshaw were trying to clear the path for himself, to get rid of a dangerous rival?

"We'll see!" said Jimmy to himself grimly.

He began to get aggressive in the office. Twice Bradshaw ignored recommendations he made, and the second time, when results had proved him right, Jimmy spoke his mind.

"If you'd done as I suggested about that Trentham note issue," he said, "we'd have kept some pretty good business that we've lost now."

"Yes?" said Bradshaw, his lip curling. "You can take it up with Mr. Marshall if you're not satisfied with my dispositions."

"Thanks—I know that," said Jimmy, matching his tone. "It doesn't matter much. I simply want you to know that I'm on to what you're trying to do. You can't do it. At least—I don't think you can."

Bradshaw only smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Jimmy wanted to do murder, but he—didn't. He bided his time instead. And when the Hadley affair came along, Jimmy threw up his head, so to speak, and with distended nostrils scented the battle.

IN the ordinary course of events Jimmy wouldn't have been in contact with the Hadley business at all. But things began to move on Friday, after lunch. Monday was Labor Day—paradoxically, a holiday, a day of rest. Week-end trips had taken nearly everyone away; Bradshaw and Sanderson had both departed

with bags at noon, to be gone until Tuesday. Mr. Marshall was in Maine. There were telegraph-wires, and the long-distance telephone was still in operation; but when he heard from Hadley, Jimmy, for private reasons of his own, was not disposed to consider either means of communication. Instead he drew a long breath and jumped in himself, intending to swim, but prepared to sink if he must.

Jimmy came back from lunch rather early that Friday. He wasn't spinning out his luncheon-time as he had; he had stopped looking at the clock in his old fashion, too. And on this particular Friday he had some work to finish; the fact that he had every reason to expect that, when it was done, Bradshaw would sneeringly condemn it didn't at all affect his eagerness to get it done. Jimmy had changed.

It was upon a calm that was almost Sabbatical that Hadley burst, a few minutes after Jimmy's return. Not much work was being done; a pleasant, lethargic anticipation of the coming holiday had spread over the office, bringing with it relaxation. Hadley, dynamic, volatile, fired by a nervous eagerness, came in like one of those black squalls that sweep up suddenly on a hot day.

"Want to see Mr. Marshall!" he barked. Jimmy looked up from his desk. "Not here? Where's Bradshaw, then? Eh? Well—Sanderson—what the devil!"

Jimmy got up and earned the undying gratitude of the precise young man whose function it was to receive visitors.

"Sorry, Mr. Hadley," he said. "We're pretty well cleaned out. Anything I can do?"

"Huh? You? Don't know you!" said Hadley. He glared at Jimmy as if that were his fault. "Want to see some one in authority—want to see 'em quick! Got to have quick action here!"

Now, Hadley's reputation was not of the best. He was a promoter of sorts. There had been times in the last five years when he had been good for two or three millions; there had been other times when a properly conducted bank would have refused to honor his check had it represented a ten-dollar overdraft.

Jimmy studied him intently for a moment.

"Suppose we go into Sanderson's office, Mr. Hadley," he said gently. "I may be able to serve you—and I may not."

HADLEY grunted, hesitated—finally followed Jimmy into Sanderson's room.

"Here's the lay-out!" said Hadley. "You know about the scarcity of ships—freight-rates climbing up to the sky—all that sort of thing—huh?" Jimmy nodded. "Well, I've got an option on a fleet of five Swedish cargo-steamers. Price—that be hanged. They're a good buy at any price. And—it's right, anyhow. They can be transferred to American registry under the new law—temporary registry, but it'll serve. But—the option's got to be taken up and the money paid in London to-morrow morning. Two o'clock now—you know how the cable's working—and it's seven o'clock in London. Close figuring! Now—"

"Better explain a little more," said Jimmy. The sound of his own voice amazed him; it was so incisive, so like the voice of Bradshaw when he was talking business. "Why are these people selling?"

"Because they've got to!" said Hadley. "Oh, this is inside stuff! They've got in bad with England—been fooling around with the Germans, I suppose. Anyhow—they'll be blacklisted. They've got to sell to get out with a whole skin—either to some English concern or to an approved neutral. Get that?"

He was adopting a patronizing tone toward Jimmy, and that stiffened Jimmy, somehow. He felt as a cat looks when it sees a dog and arches its back.

"Prices!" said Jimmy tersely, and pushed a button. Of the office-boy who answered he demanded certain books and papers. And while Hadley was reeling off figures, explosively, Jimmy was verifying certain calculations he had made as he listened.

"Right!" said Jimmy at last. He drew a deep, long breath and took his plunge. There were a score of reasons for distrusting Hadley, no matter how gilded a proposition he presented might

be. And yet Jimmy determined to take a chance that this time there was no colored gentleman concealed about the woodpile. "I guess we can look after you, Mr. Hadley. I suppose one reason you're here is that you know we should rank as an approved neutral—plus!" He reached for the pad of cable-blanks on Sanderson's desk, and for the highly confidential code-book that enabled Kennert Kane and Sons to defeat the censorship—though, be it said, with the full knowledge of powers above censors. "But—about terms?"

"Fifty-fifty!" said Hadley promptly, though in his turn he too drew a deep breath. His face, always vulpine, seemed to grow longer, his eyes brighter and sharper. Jimmy laughed, easily.

"I don't think we've got time to joke, Mr. Hadley," he said pleasantly. "We'll pay you a commission of ten per cent—which will make a pretty nice profit for you, when you add it to what you'll get from the Swedish parties."

"Commission!" said Hadley, his voice rising. "Where do you get anything like that? Gad, I'm being liberal when I only ask half the profit!"

"Possibly," said Jimmy suavely. "Ten per cent is all, though. If you're in earnest, I'm sorry."

Hadley got up angrily.

"I might have known I was wasting my time!" he said. "I'll go elsewhere—"

"As you like," said Jimmy. He glanced at his watch. "You'd better hurry, I should think. You haven't much time."

"I've time enough!" Hadley blustered.

"Then I'll take another minute," said Jimmy. His voice changed; into it came some of the bitter, sneering quality he had absorbed from listening to Bradshaw in the last few weeks. "You're trying to bluff me. You came here as a last resort—because you knew about what you'd get from us—and because you knew we could jump in at the last minute and swing this deal, when scarcely another house in town could. You've been turned down wherever you've gone, partly because of general conditions and partly—I don't mean to be unpleasant—partly on account of your reputation. Now—"

"I didn't come here to be insulted!" Hadley shouted.

"I'm going to wait one hour for you," Jimmy went on, ignoring that interruption. "If you want to come to my terms, come back, and I'll be prepared to send a cable to close the deal. If you do not—"

"Not it is!" snapped Hadley, and he went out, bristling. Jimmy grinned as he looked after him. But he was thoughtful too. He felt sure of his ground—but suppose Hadley could make good? Suppose he got some one else? Kennert Kane and Sons would lose a big profit—because there was no doubt in Jimmy's mind as to the money that was to be made out of this deal. Freights hadn't touched their high level yet; there was information in that office, and Jimmy had access to it, concerning ocean conditions. That was why he had never really hesitated about usurping the authority to cable the London office—an authority that had never been given to him, at least for use on such a scale.

"Well—I've done all I can!" said Jimmy to himself. And he sat down to wait. He drafted his cable with a good deal of care. If Hadley came back, no time need be lost. And if he didn't—well, Jimmy had taken a chance.

WAITING was nervous work. The first half-hour wasn't bad; he expected Hadley to take the full time he had allowed. But after that, every minute grew worse; he was reminded of moments when he had stood, tense and crouched, behind the line, in his football days, waiting for the ball to be snapped, when his team was fighting under its own goal-posts, wondering at what point the other team was going to strike, whether he would have his chance to spill the play.

His eye was on the door; every time it opened, he jumped. And from the door it went to the clock; it seemed to him that the hands were either racing or standing still, according to his mood. And then came a quick, nervous step outside, at a moment when he happened to have walked over toward the door—and the door was flung open. But it was Bradshaw who entered—not Hadley.

Bradshaw was excited; he made for Jimmy at once.

"Where's Hadley?" he snapped.

"I don't know," said Jimmy stiffly, following Bradshaw toward his own office. "He's been here—and I expect him back by a quarter to four."

"Been here! What did you let him go for?" said Bradshaw. "Good Lord! Here—boy! Try to get in touch with Mr. Hadley—G. P. Hadley. Try his office—call every number they can give you. Now—"

"Hold on!" said Jimmy. "Hold up on trying to get Hadley. You'd better wait until I tell you what's been going on here."

Bradshaw swung around and stared at him.

"What—" he said, and stopped helplessly. "I know what he's got hold of—I missed my train, fortunately, and went to my rooms and found a note from him."

"You don't know it all," said Jimmy with intense satisfaction. And as quickly as he could, he told exactly what had happened. When he had done, Bradshaw whistled—but, at any rate, he didn't sneer.

"I don't say you're not right—he may have been bluffing," he said. "But it was too big a chance to take—it was a bigger chance than I'd have taken! Did it occur to you that he might get backing somewhere else?"

"I took that chance," said Jimmy quietly. "Now, if you want to make me look like a fool by chasing him—"

"It's your funeral," said Bradshaw with a shrug of the shoulders. "Probably wouldn't do any good—which is the real reason I won't do it!"

Jimmy didn't answer. He sat down, in Bradshaw's room, and they both waited, watching the door. Jimmy could feel his nails biting into his palms. And then some one came in. For a moment he couldn't be sure that it was Hadley, but Hadley it was, blustering still, his eyes lighting up as soon as he saw Bradshaw.

"Hello, Arthur!" he said. "Glad you got back! I guess we can do business, now that you're on the job once more."



"You don't know it all," said Jimmy with intense satisfaction. And as quickly as he could, he told exactly what had happened. When he had done, Bradshaw whistled—but, at any rate, he didn't sneer.

But Bradshaw grinned. He turned to Jimmy, and Jimmy, utterly amazed, could have sworn that Bradshaw had winked at him.

"Afraid not, George," he said. "You'll have to keep on with Jimmy Cranford, here. We've got a way of letting the man who starts anything finish it. Go ahead, Jimmy! I stand back of any arrangement you make!"

And very quietly, but very finally, too, he walked out of the office. And Jimmy, when he came up for breath, found that

Hadley had wilted suddenly and was smiling at him quite amiably.

"Don't shoot, Colonel," said Hadley. "I'll come down. I didn't think you'd have the nerve to call my bluff! Ten per cent goes! But don't let any dust accumulate on that cable! I want to make sure of what I do get!"

HALF an hour later Jimmy, turning from the door through which Hadley had just departed, faced Bradshaw again. And the man he had come to

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hate had his hand stretched out to him in congratulation.

"Good boy, Jimmy!" he said. "I guess the hazing you got helped a little, at that! I always knew you had it in you; the deuce of it was to bring it out! Had it a little too easy for a while, didn't you? Couldn't really get going until the other team had the ball on the five-yard line?"

Jimmy took in the meaning of Bradshaw's words slowly. And as he did, he choked up a little.

"I—why—I—didn't—understand—" he stammered.

"Been a lot of good to do it if you had, wouldn't it?" Bradshaw scoffed. "Jimmy, the way you handled Hadley is classic! I meant exactly what I said when I said I wouldn't have had the nerve to do it! But even if it had gone wrong, I'd have been satisfied. And now—better let me clean up for you. I've changed my mind about going up to Maine. I think you'd better go instead. I—well, I think Eleanor would like to hear from you just what came off and why I've recommended you for Hazen's job after he goes to Buenos Aires."

He laughed as he saw the amazement in Jimmy's eyes. But it was not the laugh of a man who is amused.

"I talked to her by long-distance while you went to the mat with Hadley," he said. "Oh—to Mr. Marshall too. She said I could congratulate you, Jimmy. And I do."

A good many things were on the tip of Jimmy's tongue. But they were things that, after all, could not get themselves said.

"It—well, it's not so easy," said Bradshaw. "Still, I guess it ought to be you, Jimmy—the sort of you you're going to be now. And I've had something to do with making you come through."

Even then Jimmy could only wring his hand. The words he wanted wouldn't come. He turned away, finally, and walked gropingly toward his own desk, which wouldn't be his much longer. But through the fog that obscured his vision the figure of Eleanor appeared, growing clearer each moment;—Eleanor, as she would be waiting to greet him next morning when he got off the train.

Do you remember
Detective Gryce?
Of course! Who
could forget him?

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detective story with the fascinat-
ing ingenuity of

Anna
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The Mystery of the Hasty Arrow

the first detective novel Anna
Katharine Green has written in
several years, the best mystery
story she has ever written.

The May Red Book
Will Be on Sale
April Twenty-third



Uncle Aaron

By Bozeman Bulger

ILLUSTRATED BY DEAN CORNWELL

EARLY of a Monday morning one spring, a creaky old one-horse wagon came down the main street of our town, drawn by a bony, sway-backed, flea-bitten mare. On a smoothly worn pine board that served as a seat, perched the humped-up figure of Uncle Aaron Wade, the oldest negro and perhaps the oldest man, in the whole county. In the shadow of the wagon-body, trotted Ring, Uncle Aaron's coon-dog, long since retired as an active trailer, but known to the community almost as well as the aged negro himself.

The outfit slowly rattled to the law-office of Wade & Strother—a two-room frame building which stood on the north-west corner of the square—and stopped beneath a big mulberry tree, the dense leaves of which spread out like a huge umbrella, almost touching the slanting roof of the porch.

With a painful effort of stiffened joints, the old darky eased his withered frame to the ground. Converting one of the plow-line reins into a halter, he tied

the flea-bitten mare securely to a hitching-post that had assumed the fantastic outlines of a totem-pole through the gnawings of several generations of horses.

After tying his old mare, Uncle Aaron shuffled toward the back of the wagon and firmly admonished Ring to disregard the prying attentions of a rather rude pair of urban fox-terriers and a liver-colored pointer, intent upon a tour of inspection.

"Ef you goes projeckin' roun' wid dese yere town-dogs," he wisely warned, "dey'll shore git you in trouble. You hears me, don't you, Ring?"

The old dog, thus denied the adventure of making new acquaintances, took a couple of circular twists and resignedly flopped himself down between the two rear wheels, ignoring, but all the time cautiously watching, his tormentors.

The sidewalk, a strip of sand-covered red clay, was strewn with freshly fallen mulberries. These berries, seldom gathered except for an occasional wine experiment, squashed beneath the sorely



shod feet of the aged dinky, leaving blood-red spots on the white sand. Uncle Aaron, conscious of this menace to the white steps of the law-office, walked around to the side of the building and looked in the window. Nobody was there.

In our town, law-offices were not located upstairs over stores, as is customary in larger places, but stood on the corners of the square, in hearing of the court-cryer's voice, a convenience that made trips to the courthouse unnecessary until one was actually wanted. Members of the law-firm and their friends usually sat on short-legged chairs beneath the mulberry tree. The porch, in late summer, served as a storage place for watermelons. These melons, when ready to cut, were placed in big tubs and cooled with wellwater.

My earliest recollections are of seeing old General Wade, long since passed away, sitting beneath this mulberry tree, cooling himself with a palmetto fan. He always had for companions a coterie of old men who talked of war times and also framed the political destinies of our county. It was the privilege of small boys, if they kept quiet, to sit around and listen to these exciting narratives of martial deeds, and to slice the big

watermelons when one of the old gentlemen suggested a cutting.

It was there that I first heard profanity, and the shock planted the incident firmly in my memory. In justice to these extremely careful men, it must be said, though, that they never realized how well little boys can hear.

A young man, it seemed, was running for office, and General Wade brought up a question as to his education. Others had agreed that the young man was lacking in certain necessary qualifications.

"To hell with qualifications!" said Major Terrill, who still limped from a wound at Gettysburg. "I don't give a damn whether he's able to run that office or not. He's the son of a man who fought and bled with us, and we've got to elect him." And they did.

For years that same sentiment was our slogan.

ALL this—the very atmosphere of the place—fitted around Uncle Aaron as he stood there peering in at the window. He was definitely a part of it.

Seeing that the office was unoccupied, the old man shuffled back under the tree and waited. Presently his patience was rewarded by the coming of Colonel Strother, senior member of the firm.

"Well, how do you do, Uncle Aaron? What's troubling you?" the lawyer inquired kindly. "We haven't seen much of you lately."

"No sir, Misser Strother, de ol' man aint been very peart uv late. Cain't git 'bout much on dese old laigs."

"But you just simply had to come to town for court-week, eh?" the Colonel suggested.

"Yas sir, dat's hit, in er way. I don't keer much 'bout co't doin's, but dere's a lot uv trouble comin' on, en I wanted to see young Marse Tom Wade. Is he heah, Misser Strother?"

"Why, no, Uncle Aaron," he answered in surprise. "Didn't you know that Mr. Wade isn't with me now?"

The old darky looked blank, and then relieved as the Colonel added:

"This being court-week, I reckon you'll find him in his office over at the courthouse."

"Yas sir. Would you min' tellin' me how—"

"Oh, just go through the main corridor until you come to the last office on the left-hand side—right at the foot of the steps that go up to the judge's room."

"Thanky, sir." And the old darky proceeded across the square with what struck Colonel Strother as unusual alacrity.

The legend painted in yellow letters on the partly opened door, to which the darky had been directed, merely indicated to Uncle Aaron that it was some kind of a law-office. He could not read. Inside he could see a rather pretty young lady working at a typewriting machine, the operation of which appeared to fascinate him. He stood for several minutes watching and then respectfully knocked on the door, even though it was not closed.

The young lady, known to Uncle Aaron since her babyhood, looked up and smiled.

"Jes' keep right on, Miss Will Ella," he said. "I aint aimin' to trouble you none. I jes' wanted to see Marse Tom Wade."

"Come right in, Uncle Aaron," said Miss Preston, addressing the old negro in that tone of condescension and reverence for age so difficult for the alien-

born to imitate. "Mr. Wade is in court right now, but there will be a recess soon, and I am sure he can see you then."

"Thanky, Miss."

UNCLE AARON, holding his weather-beaten slouch hat in both hands, hobbled over to a corner chair that the young lady's glance had indicated, and sat down.

"Scuse me, Miss Will Ella," he said after having watched her operate the machine for a few minutes, "would you min' ef I ast you a question?"

"Why, no indeed, Uncle Aaron; what is it?"

"Well, ma'am, de one thing I wants to know is: who is de very bes' lawyer in de world?"

"Why," she replied with an amused smile, "I think Mr. Wade is the best lawyer around here."

"En dat's exactly whut I wuz thinkin'," he agreed solemnly. "I don't min' tellin' you, neither, dat whut I needs is de very bes' lawyer dere is."

"Oh, you have a case, have you?"

"Yassum, I suttinly has—en a mighty big one, too."

"Well, you see, Mr. Wade is now—that is, maybe he cannot—oh, I guess you couldn't understand. Suppose you tell it to me. I am a law-student, you know."

"You is a which, Miss?" asked the old man, looking incredulous.

"I am to be a full-fledged lawyer next month, and I intend to be a good one too, Uncle Aaron."

"Huh!" he grunted. "Things suttinly is comin' to a funny pass in dis day en time. Why, your ma—"

"You don't think much of my becoming a lawyer, then?" she inquired in a mischievous effort to get the quaint views of the old darky.

"No'm, Miss Will Ella, I hones'ly don't. . . . Looks to me lak you better be gittin' your haid sot on gittin' married," he added with a chuckle of frank admiration. "Dere's lots uv dese young gemmen roun' yere dat would lak to be doin' yo' lawin' fur you."

"Not so many, I reck'n," she replied, unconsciously dropping into the vernacular of the aged darky. Her musical

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Seeing that the office was unoccupied, the old man shuffled back under the tree and waited.

laugh and amused blush threw the old man into a violent spell of cackling.

"Well, ma'am," he decided when his mirth had subsided, "I'm goin' to put a case 'fore you. Min' you, I aint sayin' it's my case, but one jes' to figger on—long as you is to be a lawyer."

"What we would call a hypothetical case?" she suggested with a perfectly straight face, her eyes twinkling as she awaited the effect of the big word.

"Yassum," he said gravely, "I reck'n it'll amount to 'bout dat in de end.

"Suppos'n," he proceeded, "dat er ol' man come to you and tol' you dat his boy had stole a shote."

"You mean that he was charged with stealing the hog?" she corrected.

"Yassum, dat would be de charge—en, Miss Will Ella," he added with a chuckle, "it would come mighty nigh bein' de facts, too."

"You mean that he would be guilty?"

"I aint sayin' exactly dat, but it wouldn't make no difference if a good lawyer lak Marse Tom Wade took de case."

"Uncle Aaron," she said rather severely, "no good lawyer would take a case if he knew the defendant to be guilty. I am sure I wouldn't."

"Dat's jes' why I'm thinkin' a young woman aint got no business lawin' in a co'thouse," he impressed upon her.

"But Uncle Aaron, if a man is guilty, he certainly ought to pay the penalty. Don't you think so?"

"Yassum, I reck'n dat's right," he admitted—to be respectful. "But when a man's own boy's in trouble, he jes' natcherly wants to save dat boy and he aint keerin' much erbout whut's right. Miss Will Ella, if all de men what's guilty paid dat penalty you talk 'bout, what would be de use of havin' lawyers at all?" He looked as if he thought this a clincher.

"But some men are innocent," she suggested.

"Den if dey is, dey don't need no lawyer."

THE hypothetical case was getting in a hopeless maze for the young woman lawyer and the old darky when there was a rumble of feet upstairs.

"Judge Moore has declared recess," explained Miss Preston in answer to the darky's questioning look.

In a moment Thomas Wade, an unusually handsome man of some forty-five years, entered the office.

"Thank de Lord!" exclaimed Uncle Aaron, as he caught sight of the son of his former master. "De savior of de nigger race is heah!"

"Why, hello, Uncle Aaron," was Mr. Wade's greeting, "what brings you to town? How is Aunt Sofie?"

"De ol' lady is mighty po'rly," said Uncle Aaron. "Gittin' too old to git erbout much dese days. But she aint never too broke up wid her miseries to remember 'Marse Tom,' as you knows she always called you."

"Yes, Aunt Sofie nursed me and took a lot of care of me when I was a little boy. I was thinking about driving down to see her as soon as this session of court is over."

"She'd be mighty powerful glad to see you, Marse Tom."

"And Zach, I suppose, is just as trifling as ever?"

The lawyer laughed good-naturedly as he asked about this son who frequently brought worry to Uncle Aaron's aged mind. To the old man's way of thinking, Zach had wandered from the standard of colored respectability as fixed by the old school. He had become of the younger set—"fool niggers," Uncle Aaron classified them.

Mr. Wade saw that the old darky did not accept the levity as he had intended it.

"Yas sir, I reck'n you's right, Marse Tom," he said; "it wuz 'bout Zach dat I come to see you."

"In trouble again, is he?"

"He shore is, Marse Tom. Zach's settin' down there in that jail right now, and plum dissatisfied."

The lawyer was surprised, and his face showed it. To him it meant a professional slip that Aaron would not have grasped.

"Were you talking to Miss Preston about this?" he asked.

"Not exactly, Boss. I wuz jes' askin' de lady about who wuz de bes' lawyer in de world, and we disagreed on jes'

one point. She said she *thought* you wuz de bes', en I said I *knowed* you wuz."

The lawyer and Miss Preston laughed heartily.

"En, Marse Tom, I's in a fix where I suttinly needs de very bes' dere is."

"By the way, Miss Preston," said Mr. Wade, turning to his assistant, "have you my private docket of new cases for this week?"

The young lady nodded, and after fumbling in a drawer of her desk, she handed him a small leather-bound book.

"I must have been so busy getting things ready that I didn't notice this," observed the lawyer, glancing at an open page. . . . Suddenly he looked at his watch.

"Miss Preston, excuse me for keeping you," he said. "I notice that it is your lunch-time. You had better go now."

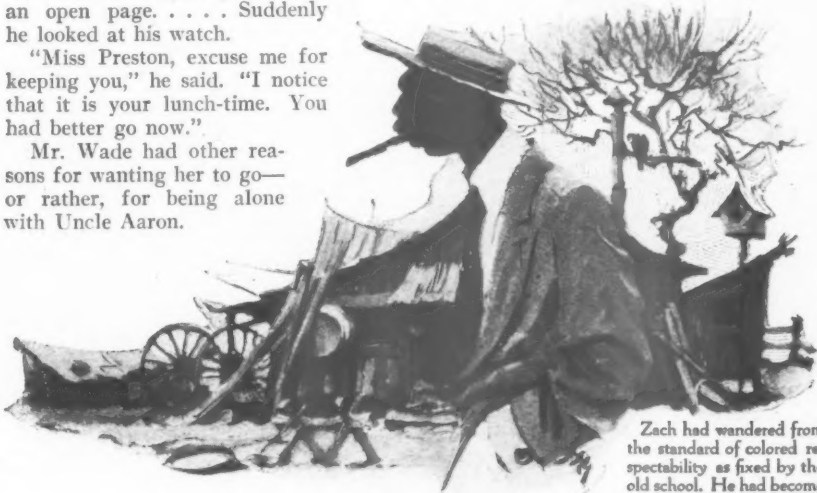
Mr. Wade had other reasons for wanting her to go—or rather, for being alone with Uncle Aaron.

tioned the lawyer. "You mustn't say that to me. You mean that there is a charge of larceny against him?"

"Dat's it, I reck'n, Marse Tom, but you knows I has always told you the truth."

"But you mustn't state a case to me now until I have explained some things to you."

"But Marse Tom," the old man interrupted, his anxiety making it impossible for him to remain quiet, "dey got some mighty strong witnesses ag'in' Zach. De haid of de hog wuz found in Zach's house, wid de Oliver mark on one ear. En besides dat, everybody knowed dat



Zach had wandered from the standard of colored respectability as fixed by the old school. He had become of the younger set—"fool niggers," Uncle Aaron classified them.

THE old negro, in his childlike mind, had a vague feeling that something was wrong—that something had unduly disturbed the lawyer, in whom he had such abiding faith. His wrinkled old face grew very serious, pathetically apprehensive.

"I didn't realize that this Zachariah T. Wade, charged with larceny, was your boy Zach," Mr. Wade said to Uncle Aaron when the young lady had gone. "How could I have overlooked that?"

"Yas sir, dat suttinly is my Zach," the darky confirmed; "he's stole a shote from Cunnel Oliver."

"Wait a minute, Uncle Aaron," cau-

Zach and dem trifling nigger friends of his'n had been eatin' po'k-chops fur a week."

"I'm awful sorry you told me this, Uncle Aaron. Why didn't you come here before court-week?"

"De facts is, Marse Tom, I didn' know nuthin' 'bout it till Sheriff Carlisle happened to be down on our place lookin' for a stray heifer, en he tol' me dat Zach wuz in jail en 'bout to go on trial. Natcherly dere wuzn't nobody for me to come to but my white folks, and yere I is. You always has got him outn trouble before. . . . I hates to see you lookin' dat way, Marse Tom. You know

Zach's my boy, no matter whut he's done."

The old man's voice quavered as if he sensed an impending disaster. Intuition told him things were not as they should be, or rather as they always had been.

"I understand you and feel for you, all right," said Mr. Wade, "and we Wades always have protected our darkies, especially those bearing the Wade name; but conditions are changed, Uncle Aaron."

"Whut do you mean by sayin' dey is changed, Marse Tom?"

"I mean that I am in a position now where I cannot defend your boy, and for that reason, you shouldn't have told me he was guilty."

The old negro's heart sank within him. He rocked to and fro in his chair, staring helplessly at the lawyer.

"You means to say, Marse Tom, dat you cain't get up in dat co't en point out to dat jury why my Zach ought to be turned loose?" he finally asked.

"I am very sorry, Uncle Aaron, but that is exactly what I mean."

"En you is goin' to let one of us Wade niggers go to de chain-gang? You know dere never has been no blot on de Wade name. Dem Wades has always been considered quality-folks in dis county."

There were tears in the old man's eyes. He shook as if with palsy.

"I see that you don't understand, Uncle Aaron. . . . You first went to see me at the old office by the mulberry tree, didn't you?"

The old man nodded.

"Yas suh, right dere where your old pa used to set."

"Well, they sent you over here because I am no longer a member of the firm of Wade & Strother. I was elected county solicitor last fall, which means that I am now the prosecuting attorney and will have to try and convict your boy!"

"You is whut?"

ON Uncle Aaron's face there was a look of incredulity. The blow hit hard. Gradually the expression of unbelief turned to one of despair.

"Marse Tom," the darky's voice quavered, "how's I evah goin' back home

en tell yo' Aunt Sofie dat you is goin' to send our boy Zach to de chain-gang? Jes' tell me dat, will you?"

The lawyer squirmed uneasily in his chair. His task was all the harder because he knew he never could make the old man understand the exacting duties of the office to which he recently had been elected.

"I am mighty sorry, Uncle Aaron," he said, "but you've made it doubly hard for me by admitting that the boy is guilty."

"How's dat, Marse Tom?"

"I am under oath to punish all violators of the law, and even if I did have a way out, I couldn't do it now, because I know that Zach is guilty."

"En dere aint nothin' you kin do?" asked Uncle Aaron.

"I'm afraid not. You wouldn't want a Wade to break his solemn oath, would you?"

"No, sir, I reck'n not," Uncle Aaron admitted, mournfully, "but dere *has* been Wades what didn't allow a thing like dat to change deir hearts."

"What's that you are saying, Uncle Aaron?"

"I wuz jes' thinkin' erbout de General—you' pa, whut's dead and gone," he said. "En I wuz thinkin' 'bout him dis mornin' when I driv up under dat ol' mulberry tree." He pointed out of the window. "In de ol' days I nevah come to town but what I see him settin' under dat tree, fannin' hisself wid a pa'm-leaf fan."

"Did he ever violate his oath?" the lawyer asked curiously.

"I reck'n you wouldn't call it dat, exactly, but you 'members right after de war when he took dat Oath of Allegiance—no, course you don't 'member, but you's heered tell uv it. Yas sir, de ol' General, he stepped up en took dat oath, widout so much as winkin' his eye, but Marse Tom, you knows jes' as well as I do dat ef trouble had started again he'd er been right back fightin' dem Yankees jes' same as if nuthin' had evah happened."

"My father was mighty fond of you, Uncle Aaron," said the lawyer, avoiding a direct answer to that irrefutable statement.

"Yas sir, he wuz, and I reck'n ef he wuz here right now, or your ma, either, dey'd er done somethin' to git my boy Zach outn dat jail. I knows dey would."

"Regardless of circumstance?"

"Yas sir, regardless uv nothin'. 'Cause he's my boy. Makes no difference whut he's done; he's still my Zach, aint he, Marse Tom?"

The lawyer tapped the table meditatively. The old darky's words had yanked him back to his childhood—to his obligations. His distress was more poignant than that of the black man, even though better hidden.

The old negro rambled along, growing enthusiastic as he recalled the days after the war, Thomas Wade's mind going back with him to the time when as a child he was taught to reverence Uncle Aaron as a servant with unusual privileges. He recalled that no boy in the neighborhood was ever permitted to tease or plague the old man. As the darky ceased talking, for a moment, the lawyer reminded him of this.

"Yas sir, dat's a fac'," he said, "en I reck'n if you know'd why, dey'd be some way fur you to help my boy Zach."

The lawyer winced at this. He did know why, but the activities of his grown-up years had made him forget.

"Why, I believe you stuck by my mother and the family and took care of them while the General was off to the war."

"Dat's right, Marse Tom, but it aint all. I aint nevah said much erbout it. But ol' Jedge Wilkins upstairs'd know. He wuz a boy a little too young to go to de war den. Ol' Major Terrill, he knows too. I reck'n dere's several of de white gemmen left who still kin recollect."

"That makes it all the harder for me," observed the prosecuting attorney. "It hurts me, Uncle Aaron."

"Yas sir, en it hurt ol' Aaron, too, when dem Yankees treated de ol' nigger so rough," declared the old man, feeling that he had struck a vulnerable point and should push it.

THOMAS WADE'S glance wandered out across the square to the old mulberry tree. He could still picture the

friends of his father—all of those whom Uncle Aaron had mentioned—sitting there in its shade, talking over war-times and telling the same story that he knew the old negro was going to tell now. His mind then turned to the colored man in jail; the prosecuting attorney was sorely distressed.

"And what did those Yankees do to you, Uncle Aaron?" he finally asked, feeling that the old man expected it.

The old darky prefaced his story by explaining, in his ingenuous way, conditions at the Wade homestead when it was learned that Federal troops under General Rousseau were on a march—raid we called it—through that section of Alabama. The Wade homestead and the less imposing ones of several neighbors were directly in the line of march, and the unprotected women were terror-stricken. Jewelry and all kinds of beloved mementos were buried in the gardens, back of the smokehouses and even under the eaves of the houses. To this day some of it has never been found.

"En, Marse Tom," narrated Uncle Aaron, "dere wuzn't more'n ernuff things to eat to last us a week. Dere wuzn't no use to hide dat, as we'd er needed it jes' as quick as de Yankees would. De only thing we had to be worried erbout wuz horses. Dere wuz twenty-four haid on de place, and 'lessn we could keep dem, we couldn't make no crops."

The old man, well into his story now, leaned back and looked straight past Thomas Wade into the past.

"On dat day when some young gemmen rid up to de yard and tol' us dat de Yankees wuz right den crossin' de river, everybody in de house set up er cryin'. We knowed dey'd make it to de Wade place an hour by sun, en we still hadn't hid dem horses."

"A crowd of young fellers what wuz practicin' up for goin' to de war went out to try en fight dese Yankees, but you should er seen 'em flyin' back! Your ma used to say dat you could er played checkers on enny one uv 'em's coat-tail." The old man chuckled gleefully as he recalled this.

"Dem boys didn't have no idea how many Yankees dere wuz in de world. En,



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more'n dat, dey didn' know until dey seen 'em wid der own eyes, dat every Yankee in de world wuz on de other side of dat river. Yas sir, Marse Tom, I reck'n dere wuz millions uv 'em.

"En"—the old darky broke into a reminiscent smile—"thirty of our young gemmen thought dey could stop 'em. Yas sir, dey went right out dere on de bank and bust loose at 'em wid shotguns. When dem Yankees opened on 'em—say, Marse Tom, kin you see dem thirty boys comin' back jes lickety-split down dat road?"

"Waal, sir, when dey rode into de yard, all excited and tellin' 'bout dem millions of Yankees, your ol' Missus, instid of gettin' worked up, like mos' women does, got jes' as calm as if she wuz runnin' de whole war. Your ma wuz a mighty brave woman, Marse Tom.

"Waal, sir, de ol' Missus called to me, and when I got up to de po'ch, she said: 'Aaron, is you ready to help? Is you goin' to stick by me and help save ourselves from dese Yankees? I know I can trust you.'

"Marse Tom, I knowed what de ol' Missus meant, en I knowed dat she did trust ol' Aaron. En Marse Tom, you know I wuz goin' to stick by de fambly. De main pussons I keered fur in dis worl' wuz dem—de ol' Missus en de ol' general.

"I said: 'Yes'm, you kin count on Aaron.'

"De ol' Missus tol' me to git dem horses out of de way and not give 'em up no matter whut happened. She splaind to me dat if dem horses wuz lost, we might all starve to death. I said 'Yes'm,' en I haided right fur de horse-lot.

"I tuck de horses down in de swamp a mile back of de house—you knows where it is, but it wuz thick woods in dem days. Waal, sir, I tied dem horses wid halters, in a place I knowed 'bout, and give 'em ernuff haidway so dey could feed on de trees and grass. Den I lit out fur de big house.

"I nevah has knowed to dis day whut triflin' nigger seen me go 'way wid dem horses; but jes' de same, somebody tol' de Yankees, and dey cotch me 'fore I could git back to de ol' Missus."

HERE the aged darky stopped to dry his perspiring face, and in the meantime his sing-song voice had risen so that it could be heard in the courtyard. Thomas Wade, he noted, was sitting spellbound.

"Marse Tom," he resumed, "when I got back in sight of de house, where dem Yankees cotch me, de whole place wuz simply running over wid Yankees. Everywhere you'd look you'd see one of dem blue coats en a gun. Dey knocked down de fence round de front yard and rid right up to de well to water deir horses. Dey dug up de dirt floor of de smokehouse, took all our hams en side-meat—en everything. Dere wuz one or two nice gemmen, whut called demselves officers, and dey respected de ol' Missus and made dem Yankees keep outn de big house. Everywhere else dey run wild. De officers had supper wid de ol' Missus, and later on we found dat dey'd lef' money fur it, but de rest of 'em wuz jes' plain no 'count Yarkees—po'r white-trash.

"En when dem soldiers cotch me, dey ast me where wuz dem damn' horses, and I 'lowed I didn't know nuthin' 'bout no horses. Dey tol' me I wuz lyin', en one of 'em hit me over de haid wid a stick. Dey kicked me on de laigs and done everything, but I had promised ol' Missus dat I'd stick by de fambly, en I never tol' 'em one word.

"Dis got 'em kin' er irritated, en dey tied me up wid ropes en tuck me toward de swamp. I knowed, though, dey couldn' find dem horses, and I kep' my mouth shet plum tight. Dey tuck me down to de edge of de swamp en tied another rope round under my arms, en den I seed whut dey wuz goin' to do. Dey hung me up to dat tree-limb by my armpits and kep' on tryin' to make me tell. I kep' my mouth shet tighter'n evah. Marse Tom, dat rope suttinly did hurt, but every time I'd git to hollerin', I'd think of de ol' Missus. Finally dey went away en lef' me hangin' dere under dat tree-limb.

"Long toward mornin' I jes' natcherly hurt so bad dat I lost my haid, went to sleep er somethin'. De ol' Missus said afterward dat I'd fainted.

"Ennyway, when I come to I wuz in

de big house, layin' on one of dem good beds, and de ol' Missus wuz rubbin' me wid liniments en things. When I looks up at las', and sees de ol' Missus' face all red from cryin', de fust thing I ast her wuz if dem Yankees got de horses.

"She said: 'No, Aaron, you've saved us.' And she looked into my eyes lak nobody else evah has since.

"I went right back to sleep, Marse Tom, and dreamed 'bout de time when we wuz all happy and nobody nevah had thought 'bout no war—'member it jes' as well as if it wuz yistiday.

"De next time I come to, de ol' Missus wuz still dere, en she tol' me dat four of dem young boys, whut had tried to fight de Yankees, had foun' me hangin' to dat tree and had cut me down and fetched me home in deir arms."

THE old negro looked up and saw a single tear trickle down the cheek of the prosecuting attorney.

"En Marse Tom," he concluded, "dat's why, when you wuz a little fellow hanging to de ol' Missus' apron-strings, dat she always made you respect ol' Uncle Aaron's feelings. Dat's why de ol' General give me en ol' Aunt Sofie dat little house and ten acres dat we lives on now.

"Marse Tom," he repeated, "dat's why ol' Aaron thinks dat one of dese heah oaths don' 'mount to so much when it's er question of takin' keer of de fambly. I wants my boy outn dat jail."

The prosecuting attorney arose and took Uncle Aaron's hand. His other arm formed an affectionate half-circle around the old man's shoulder.

"Uncle Aaron," he said, "I wish now you hadn't told me. You've distressed me terribly. I think I would rather resign my office than prosecute Zach, even if he is guilty, but my oath is in front of me. I don't know what I can do."

There was a sound at the door, and both looked up, somewhat startled. Engrossed in Uncle Aaron's recital, they had not noticed a man standing there.

"I know what you can do," a voice

was saying, and it was the voice of Judge Wilkins, who had dropped in for a recess-call. From the door he had heard Uncle Aaron's story.

"I know what can be done," said the Judge again. The attorney and the old darky looked at the Judge expectantly, neither making a sound. "We are going to lose this indictment!" he announced.

"In violation of our oaths?" asked Mr. Wade.

"It may not be a violation, and if it is, I don't give a hang. This indictment will be missing this term, and when the case comes up for trial again, there will be no prosecuting witnesses. What is one hog, more or less, to Colonel Oliver? He has five hundred of them."

"But how will we get around old Til Wagner, the court clerk? He's been there thirty years, and you know he's mighty particular," suggested the prosecuting attorney.

"My boy," said the Judge, "Til Wagner was one of the young men who cut Aaron down from that tree, and Colonel Oliver's uncle was another. They know."

"Dey suttinly does," affirmed Uncle Aaron, shaking his head from side to side, for emphasis.

"Do you think the Colonel would drop the charges against Zach if I bought him another shote?" suggested Thomas Wade, as a way had suggested itself to clear his conscience.

"He would do it, anyway," said the Judge, "but of course, if you think it would make you feel better to buy him another shote, why, go ahead. In the meantime, this indictment is lost. I will have it so entered."

A smile came into Uncle Aaron's face—a smile that meant unshaken faith in the loyalty of his friends. He looked out at the mulberry tree, and what he may have thought he never said; but with sudden inspiration, he suggested:

"Gemmen, fur dat mattah, dere aint no use in Marse Tom buyin' no hog. My boy Zach could git de Cunnel another one in two nights after he's outn dat jail."

Be sure to read "*The Scorpion*," by Harry Irving Greene, who wrote "*Avalanche Trail*," in the May issue of the Red Book. It's a story of life on the border, and it abounds with real thrills.



"Yes, Mr. Lynn wants to marry me too, I think," she said demurely. "Mr. Lynn wants to die, I think," he mocked her grimly.

The Hand

A very short story
with a very big theme

By Samuel
Gordon

ILLUSTRATED
BY HANSON BOOTH

PONDEROUSLY, like the behemoth he was, Jacques Malpart clattered into the drink-parlor owned by Ambroise Fontaine, which was also the unofficial clubroom of Grandrepos. You will find Grandrepos, if you have the patience to look for needles in haystacks, to be a tiny if foolhardy outpost of creation, somewhere on the ragged northwest Canadian edge of it.

"Good evening, Angelique," boomed Jacques.

"Good evening, Jacques," tinkled back Angelique, the proprietor's young daughter. And she stooped a little lower over her knitting as she sat there solitarily in the cozy grandfather's chair by the side of the blazing hearth. "Still so cold?" she added after a short pause, which Jacques had filled in by encompassing the enticing picture she made.

"Cold!" he exclaimed. "If it isn't fifty below zero, it's hot as hell." With immense and unconcealed satisfaction he looked about the large, barnlike apartment, which was bare of its usual occupants. "And by token of it, all the badgers are hiding in their holes."

"One badger is abroad to-night," said Angelique, flashing him a swift smile from under her long lashes.

"Just because he counted on finding you alone."

Jacques laughed his deep, guttural laugh as he drew off his big gauntlets and peeled out of the brown-wolf *paletot* that enveloped him to his heels. His

lungs, still heaving with the icy stricture of the outer air, blew out huge volumes of breath as though he carried in his chest the very steam-bellows he used in his smithy. Angelique knew little history, and nothing at all of medieval history; otherwise, as Jacques stood there, towering, gigantic, tawny-bearded, her thoughts might have gone back to that mighty Frankish emperor Barbarossa, who might very well have been his ancestor in a direct line of ascent.

Clumsily he fished out a pigskin tobacco-pouch and threw it in her lap.

"Roll me a smoke—there's a good Christian! My fingers are stiff."

With a deftness betokening much previous practice, she complied and handed the cigarette to him.

"No, no, I want it to taste good," he said, waving it back.

Smiling and shoulder-shrugging, she put the cigarette between her lips, struck a match and lighted it.

"That's better," he said, taking it from her after she had drawn a puff or two. Then he dropped into a chair, sprawled back and crossed one great top-booted leg over the other, contentment personified.

"Grog?" asked Angelique, brisk and businesslike.

"No. Sit down. I only want to drink with my eyes."

She sat down again and took up her knitting. She felt his gaze swallowing her greedily; and again she tingled with that strange blending of fascination and fear she always felt in his presence. She knew what this man's coming meant for her. She guessed the pent-up passion that seethed silently in his mighty frame, and against the response to which her instinct was fighting. This Jacques Malpart—there was something ill-omened in his very name—was a terrible man to be trusted with such a frail, gossamer thing as a woman's happiness. He looked as if he might take it in those great brawny arms of his and crush it like an eggshell, out of sheer love—and perhaps not always out of love. There were mysteries in his life to be explained.

JACQUES seemed to read her thoughts like an open book.

"That will be all right, Angelique," he

answered her. "Only—when is it going to be?"

"Is what going to be?" she hedged lamely.

"Oh, come, come. No hide-and-seek business. You know you're going to marry me. When, Angelique?"

"Never."

"Never is a long time, especially for a woman." And then an angry gleam leaped into his eyes and he leaned forward, his fists clenched menacingly. "There's some one else, Angelique. It's that coxcomb engineer fellow from the States."

"Yes, Mr. Lynn wants to marry me too, I think," she said demurely.

"Mr. Lynn wants to die, I think," he mocked her grimly.

She laid down her knitting and turned to him with an abrupt movement and a look that probed his very soul.

"But Jacques, I'm going to give you the first chance."

"I should say so. The first and the last and all in between," he laughed, reassured. And then he became troubled again as he sensed something more behind her words. "What do you mean, Angelique?"

"Before I say yes, you must prove something to me."

"That I love you?"

"No—that you didn't hate some one."

He stared at her, nonplused.

"Your first wife, Jacques." And then she dropped her voice with a sudden constraint. "You know there were ugly things said at the inquest."

"Lies, damnable lies!" he thundered. "She wanted to put the noose round my neck, did Jeannette Brabazon, the spiteful, perjuring jade—may her soul roast in purgatory when she dies. What was it she swore to? That, peering in at my window, she saw me, finger on trigger, give Winnie the choice of dying by my hand or her own. If she saw that, why didn't she run and raise the alarm? 'Stiff with horror,' was her excuse. Buncombe! I tell you Winnie died just the way I deposed before the coroner. The poor thing was crazed with pain, and drank from the bottle by mistake. Jeannette wanted to get even with me for jilting her."

"I know there have been many women in your life—for their sins," said the girl quietly. "But they don't concern me. My affair is with Winnie, and whether your conscience is clear about her. I want to make sure that you gave her all the chances of being happy she had a right to expect from you. No one ever saw much of her. She was such a shrinking, timid little thing. . . . Jacques, I have seen you shiver as if an icy hand had laid itself on your soul. I don't want to marry a man who is haunted. A man who is afraid of the dead becomes cruel to the living."

"Oho! Then it's yourself you're thinking about."

"Do you blame me? I have a right to be happy. And that brings me back to my point. Jacques, you've got to prove to me, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there's no remorse dogging you in the matter of your wife's death."

"I'll prove it," he said with great alacrity. "I'll swear it before the Curé, on a crucifix."

"That's not enough, Jacques."

"Not enough? *Ciel!* I can't go down into her grave and bring it from her in writing, can I?"

"Not quite, but nearly."

He gave a jump and looked at her hard, as if doubting her sanity.

"Listen, Jacques," she said, smiling tremulously. "I want you to give me a sign, a sign such as I, believing in the things beyond and in the powers that transcend our poor human ken, could not possibly doubt. Come closer, Jacques, and I will tell you what."

And then, in hushed whispers which showed how much she was awed by her own words, she told him. And as she spoke, she gazed around her fearfully at times, as if she apprehended some listener standing back of her, unseen and unannounced. And once she leaped up with a startled little scream as the flame of the oil-lamp, suspended from the smoke-blackened crossbeams, shot up with a spluttering hiss. It was as if some inanimate thing had suddenly been endowed with the gift of laughter.

Jacques sat silent, twirling the ends of his shaggy beard, staring before him in perplexity after she had finished.

"Did you understand me, Jacques?" she whispered, rousing him.

"I got you, all right. But by thunder, that's a queer notion of yours, girl!"

"If you weren't too polite, you'd call it—well, something else, wouldn't you, Jacques?"

"No, no. I see your point. But why at dead of night, and a moonless night at that, Angelique?"

"It's easy to deal with one's conscience when the sun is shining, Jacques."

"And how will you know I've kept to that part of it?"

"I must trust you with something," she replied simply.

"And then will you marry me?"

"Yes, Jacques. As soon after as you wish."

That big body of his seemed to contract with a spasm of joy. He stepped quickly across to the window and pulled back the hangings.

"Look, Angelique, there's no moon to-night!"

"The darker the night, the brighter the morning when it comes," she said, her words big with significance.

A FEW moments later he stormed out again into the night, the music of her promise ringing in his ears. His way took him back to the forge, and there he got busy. It was a strange, enigmatic sort of business. From a planed pole of mountain-ash he cut off a length of two feet and whittled one end of it to a tapering point. This same point he tempered in the banked-up clinkers of his furnace to the strength and hardness of an iron spike. Across it, six inches from the top, he nailed a piece of wood, so giving to the contraption the shape of a rudely fashioned cross.

He tested the point, grasping the cross like a dagger and driving it full tilt against the stone flooring. He nodded to himself approvingly. It would serve. And now for the accessories. From his tool-shed he picked a spade, a heavy, short-handled mallet and a stable-lantern. Then on again with his great topcoat, and he was ready to start—no, not quite. The most important thing he had almost forgotten. From his pantry he produced a full flask of cognac. He

slipped it into his pocket. Then, on second thoughts, he took it out again. Just as well to carry half that flask with himself for bottle.

It struck him, now that he was under way with his adventure, that it partook of a grotesque sort of solemnity. Fear and reverence went hand in hand. After all, Angelique was little more than a child, younger even than Winnie had been at the time she had been left stranded, a lonely waif, by her dead father at Grandrepos, and an amorously chivalrous impulse had made him take her for wife. And now Angelique had sent him to visit his wife's grave at dead of night, and to leave on that same grave a sacred token of his visit. That was all it amounted to, her great talk about putting his conscience to the test. An ordeal of darkness! It was sufficient for her naïve fancy, still peopled with hobgoblins and all the creatures of her superstitious faith. And Jacques laughed aloud at this queer blending of folklore and religious teachings.

He strode on at a swinging pace. The spirit of the frost sang with a live voice through the tonic air, or again it twanged like a harp. The keen nip, exhilarating even to the point of pain, sent weird melodies humming and drumming through his ears. As he battled against the icy blast, the heavy folds of his wolf-skin coat, flapping cumbrously round his feet, were like sails driving a ship back on her course. By the time he reached the cemetery gate he seemed to have measured the aching vastnesses of the Arctic continent.

EVEN now his journey was not yet over. Just like Winnie, he thought to himself with a choking oath, to be always giving unnecessary trouble. Her grave was right at the farther end of the burial-ground, where Christian punctilio had set apart a small enclosure for those who were not worthy to associate with the dead who had piously fallen asleep in God.

Ah, at last, here was the plot of the excommunicated. In a way, he reflected, mitigating his judgment of Winnie, it was more convenient, for otherwise it would have meant loss of time in picking

out her grave under the white pall which an indiscriminating providence had spread over the righteous and the wicked for a common winding-sheet. The enclosure contained only two graves besides Winnie's: that of the Blackfoot Indian whom the Curé had baptized, snatching him like a brand from the burning on the night before the red scoundrel had expiated his crime of murder on the gallows; and the resting-place of the half-breed servant girl with the child of her shame. Splendid company for a wife of Jacques Malpart, thought Jacques, as tingling with anger, he set down his lantern by the side of that third grave.

He took up his spade and began to shovel away the layer of snow that encrusted the top of the mound. Presently he heard the clang of the implement as it impinged on the adamant earth with a sound of steel upon steel. He reached down for the cross and mallet—he would get through with it quickly, before the frost bit at his vitals. . . . The next moment he gasped as the darkness suddenly smote him between the eyes like a human fist.

Name of a dog—he had kicked over the lantern! Matches? Hastily, as well as he could with his thick gloves, he dived into all his pockets. *Peste!* He hadn't any. And then he remembered seeing his box last on the tavern table, next to Angelique's work-basket. He comforted himself with a new glad thought. Perhaps she was sitting there looking at it now. It would serve her as a souvenir and keep her mind off that plaguy New Yorker. It didn't so much matter about the lantern. If a man cannot see, he can grope.

And so he groped. Seating himself sideways on the grave, he planted the point of the cross against the surface of the hummock, lifted his mallet and struck. A curiously dull thud answered him. The petrified earth resisted like a living thing in protest against a threatened wound. He was irritated, and struck more fiercely, wondering vaguely at the muffled, sullen echo it gave out. With the instinct of a lifelong training at his trade, he never once, dark though it was, missed the head of the cross.

Yet he seemed to make no progress.

The sweat poured down his face, congealing in globules on the fringes of his beard. But he worked on. *Diable!*—would it never bite into the crust! Ah, at last—he uttered a whoop of triumph—the point seemed to grip. With mighty and yet mightier blows he drove and drove. The point gripped tightly and yet more tightly still. With frenzied force he swung the mallet—and yes, the cross stood firm! He pulled out his flask and with a long, gurgling gulp drained it dry.

For a few moments he remained seated, catching his breath with deep, laboring sobs. Then he rose, a creaking stiffness in all his joints. He would leave his tools here till the morning, when he would bring Angelique to see for herself that he had done her bidding to the letter. He took one stiff stride forward—and then came to an abrupt halt.

WHAT was this? He could have sworn that something had jerked at him somewhere, somehow. Again he made a move, and again that same sense of something mysterious, uncanny, tugging at him, holding him back with impalpable, invisible bonds. His brain was thick with spirituous fumes, but he was sober enough to feel that obstinately tautening strain. He could not get away—he was being held! God in heaven!—he gave vent to a croaking laugh,—what was it that was holding him?

Slowly, submissively, as though answering an imperiously compelling summons, he faced around again to the grave. At first there was still nothing to be seen. But by and by, through almost imperceptible stages of vision, some white thing glimmered forth on him against the solid ebony of earth and air and sky. And gradually it took to itself shape and meaning. It was the cross he had planted there. Or no, it was no longer a cross. It was a misshapen, spectral hand thrust up from the cavernous *penetralia* of that unhallowed grave. Yes, that's what it was—a hand!

He nodded toward it with a fatuous, wiseacre air. Ah, he knew whose hand it was—the icy hand which Angelique had seen stroking his soul. He knew also why it had been endowed with that de-

moniacally magnetic power to hold him without even putting its touch on him. There was something disdainful in the effortless distance at which it kept. *Dieu*, how cold it must feel in its bony nakedness! And he must stand still, very still. For if he moved, he might see a yet more dreadful portent. He might see that brittle, skeleton hand break and crumble with the wrench, and even so hold him, hold him until it chose to let him loose of its own accord—if it ever choose to let him loose at all.

So he stood, looking and looking and looking, and seeing nothing but that ghostly hand. And now he was not only seeing. He was also hearing. He heard a voice he knew, a voice sweet, cajoling, caressing, as if even the bitterness of death could not rob it of its dulcet tenderness. And yet in its whispering softness it rang louder than the trump of doom.

"Yes, they slandered you, my



"I begged—'Love me a little!' 'I will love you a lot—when you are dead,' you replied."

Jacques," said the caressing voice. "They mouthed evil calumnies against you. It wasn't true, what Jeannette said, that you threatened to shoot me if I had refused to take the poison of my own free will. You did not threaten me."

He nodded stupidly.

"No, my Jacques, you did not give me the choice of such a swift, merciful death. You preferred to keep me on the rack, twisting the screw slowly, cog by cog, snapping my heartstrings one by one. When did you begin? Oh, early, quite early. It was not long before your hot kisses began to cool, when the sight of me became first irksome, then hateful. . . . I remember the first blow that sent me bruised and bleeding to the ground—it is smarting yet, that first blow. Are you listening, Jacques?"

Oh, he was listening. Every pore of his body had become an ear.

"No, you were not merciful enough to make an end of me quickly," the voice went on again. "That brute blood-lust of yours reveled in seeing me writhe—oh, only when the liquor was in you, Jacques, only then. But my most pleasing agonies I kept from you. Those I suffered when I had a chance of clasping my despairing hands in secret. And then that final scene of all. Do you remember the last words we said to one another, my Jacques?"

And without waiting, the voice went on:

"Jacques, I begged it of you on my knees—'Love me a little, only a very little!' And your reply to me—do you remember that too?"

"I will love you a lot—when you are dead," you replied.

"Really, Jacques? Do you promise me that?" I asked.

"There's nothing in the world I would promise you more readily," you assured me.

"And then, content with that promise, I drank the poison as if it were sweet wine. You did not force me to drink it, Jacques—Jeannette swore falsely. I died only because, since

I could not have your love in life, I would have it in death. You never murdered me, Jacques: I witnessed to that before the Judgment-seat. But now you must make good your word. You must stay with me. Don't go back to that other woman. She will never love you half as much as I love you, Jacques. Stay with me, husband mine."

"Yes, Winnie, I'll stay," came his cry. "I couldn't get away if I would. Not while you're holding me like this—holding me."

Something snapped in his head. His breath was being consumed by flashes of prismatic flame; and then, twisting around, he pitched headlong down, like a stricken bull.

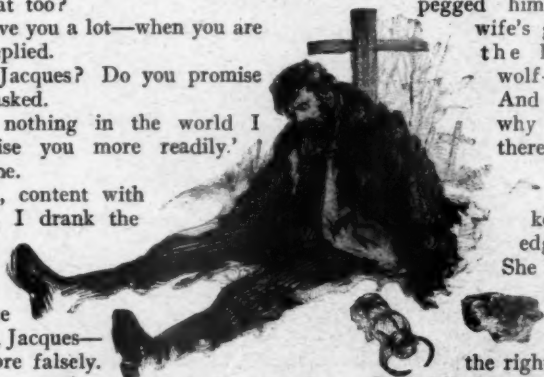
SO they found him the next day, and the wonder of it was great through the land. "Died by the hand of God," was the jury's verdict. They knew of no other hand. And indeed, it would have been hard for more sophisticated men than these simple *habitants* to guess at all the inwardness of it.

There was, for instance, the strange attitude in which Jacques' body lay when they came upon it. It was resting with the shoulders against the cross, the arms wide outspread. It might be blasphemy, but to some there came the involuntary thought of a latter-day crucifixion.

But more puzzling still were those other questions, to which there never was any answer. What had induced Jacques to go to the cemetery that inexorable winter night? And why had he tent-

pegged himself to his wife's grave through the hem of his wolf-skin coat? And moreover, why had he stayed there to be frozen to death?

Angelique kept her knowledge to herself. She told no one, not even Hugh Lynn, after he had the right to share her secrets. So much she owed to Jacques.



HONEST HETTY

By Ida M.
Evans

ILLUSTRATED
BY A. POPINI

IN busy season, the personnel of the La Mode Wholesale Millinery House, from bald old President Jolsky down to Jenny, the last bow-legged errand-girl, attended strictly to the millinery business and paid scant heed to the happenings of the outside world or to its own private affairs. Only one thing was worth consideration for the time being, and that was to get hats, feathers, silk, velvet, buckles and buckram—and bills for the same—into freight- or express-office and thence to impatient customers as swiftly as possible.

When the Wabash River went on its customary spring rampage and drowned hundreds, the La Mode said absently, "Too bad," but kept right on assuring Minnesota that Italian chips were, as ever, as strong as Sandow. When auto-

bandits took possession of the town and shot up bartenders and bank-presidents with impartial zeal, the La Mode murmured preoccupiedly, "It's an awful state of affairs—why don't the police do something?" and went right on enthusing over the last imported batch of embroidered chiffons. When one of the velvet-salesmen swallowed a tablet of bichloride of mercury instead of the supposed aspirin, the La Mode exclaimed vaguely, "It's a shame!" but reflected, with one irritable mind, that he might have been more careful till slack season.

So for two months one spring, no one paid much attention to the fact that



Hetty Bailey, illustrator for the catalogues put out semi-annually by the La Mode, was holding her small white chin rather proudly high, while her pink lips were a trifle too compressed to express perfect happiness.

And yet the La Mode, or most of it, knew perfectly well what was the matter. But it had no time to talk about Gene Brudy's having been seen twice at the Regal Dancing Inn with a small blonde girl, or about his having had Pearl de Milde, the dress-hat model, three times at a fox-trotting tea-room, or about a pretty woman in mauve charmeuse with whom a brother salesman had sighted him one night at a theater.

But after the last rush orders had been filled and dispatched and the whole house, as one weary soul, had drawn a long, relieved breath, everyone said vivaciously that Gene ought to be ashamed of himself and it would serve him good and right if Hetty broke off with him.

Hetty Bailey was a tall, slim, sweet-faced girl, with pretty brown hair, pretty, wistful gray eyes and a pretty, gentle mouth. Everyone liked her.

But everyone like Gene too; he was a good fellow and a good salesman. And a great many persons agreed with Deborah Croise, saleswoman in the trimmed-hat section and one of Hetty's few intimates, when she snapped: "It's perfectly shameful of him to treat her so. But why"—with indignation—"does she let him?"

"That's what I'd like to know," agreed Florence Cully, turning up an aquiline nose. Florence had charge of the La Mode switchboard. "Before I'd let a man make a date with me and break it and make it again, and me merely say" (unkindly Florence mimicked Hetty's gentle, hurt voice heard over the switchboard), "'Very well, Gene' why, I'd—I'd—" Florence floundered for words to describe her likely action.

Deborah supplied them: "Why, I'd know it!"—with a shrug.

There was no doubt but that all the world within earshot of Deborah would know it also, whatever happened. Deborah's mouth was not pink and gentle, like Hetty's. It was red and determined.

Deborah had a reputation for selling retailers what the La Mode preferred should be sold at the time—not what the retailers preferred to buy.

BUT Deborah was not the young woman to say behind a person's back what she dared not say to that person's face. Anyway, she had known Hetty since they were six years old and together were wont to elude their hard-working mothers and slip down the alley to the delicatessen for a taffy-apple. So straightway she said the same thing to Hetty herself. And she took pains to say it clearly and lengthily. Twice or thrice in the past she had merely hinted it, and Hetty had been too obtuse (or too proud) to understand. So now Deborah spoke plainly.

"Hetty Bailey, you make me tired! Why do you let him?"

Hetty flushed, and her pencil jabbed the wrong way and gave an unlovely width to a brim that had been about to be sketched with smartly narrow outline. It was evident that she did not at all care to wear her heart out on her green tub-silk sleeve, and she resented Deborah's yanking it out to that exposed position. But Deborah continued:

"It's perfectly weak-minded of you, Hetty!"

"Is it?" chillily murmured Hetty, intently erasing the awkward line from her sketching-pad.

But Deborah Croise was seldom affected by a small thing like chilly manner. Valiant with good intention, she went on: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself—that's my opinion."

"Indeed!" Hetty's tone now was not only as chilly as Greenland's noted mountains, but it was glaciated with dignity.

"Yes—indeed, indeed, indeed!" cried Deborah.

It is difficult to maintain effective dignity with a person with whom some sixteen years before you sucked the same taffy-apple. Less dignifiedly but very petulantly Hetty assured Deborah that she and Gene Brudy perfectly understood each other, and although he might pay spasmodic attentions, in a business way or otherwise, to other girls whom



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he happened to meet, in his heart he liked her best.

"Possibly," snapped Miss Croise. "And are you all your life going to let him *like* you best—and *treat* other women best?"

Hetty's face crimsoned as she helplessly glanced around at two errand-girls loitering at the other side of the office with no visible excuse for loitering. She knew that they were enjoying this disclosure of her emotional affairs.

Deborah did not mind such trifles as

stray listeners, and she proceeded unabashed to lay out her own heart-secrets.

"Hetty, do you know why Frank Satton never looks at a girl but me?"

Hetty began a cold but complimentary murmur.

"Bosh!" swiftly sniffed Deborah. "Nothing of the sort. It's simply because I keep him so busy watching me to be sure that I don't look at any other man, that he has no time to do any looking himself."

Hetty proudly raised her soft chin

higher (already it was high) and said that if she couldn't hold a man's love by natural means, she was sure that she did not care to hold it at all!

"Bosh!" snorted Deborah with the license of friendship, and said candidly that for her part she wouldn't care much for any man that she didn't have to scheme to keep. Tame cats didn't appeal to her—any more than did a spineless customer who had no more gumpiness than to take anything a salesperson shoved on her.

Hetty said aloofly that she was busy and industriously went on sketching a pink satin submarine.

Pityingly Deborah Croise looked at her. "My dear,"—patronizingly,—"any man likes best the last woman who has made him think he likes her best! And any woman who will put enough acumen and energy on the job can make 'most any man think whatever she wants him to think. Provided, of course,"—with an airy wave of a well-manicured, well-ringed hand,—"that she isn't lopsided or hasn't a greasy complexion. And sometimes"—thoughtfully—"you'll see the awfulest-looking woman take a really nice man—"

HETTY was not interested in abstractions. Rudely she interrupted: "If Gene thinks he likes another woman best, he may go to her. I do not care. Especially Pearl de Milde." Flushed face bent lower over cardboard, and industrious sketching changed to furious sketching.

Astutely and sympathetically Deborah translated this to mean that Hetty cared violently.

"Nonsense," she comforted. "It's simply a question of whether you care enough to hold on. All men are the same. Did I ever tell you, Hetty, about the girl once who worked in the same office with Frank? One of the slim, sly kind, who get a man interested in 'em, you know, by asking his opinion on their hair and new gray shoes and toothache and religion and trouble at home and everything else." Deborah sniffed eloquently. "Well! I soon put a stop to all the kindly interest she so slickly aroused in my Frank."

Hetty's head raised a trifle, though her cold, pretty eyes were still on the sketch-pad.

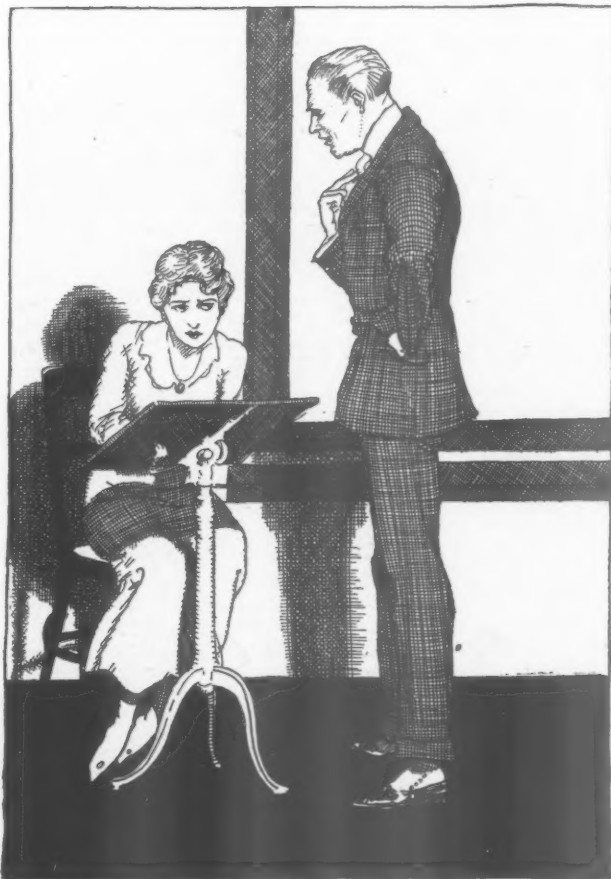
"I merely mentioned to Frank that there was a new man in the velvets here at the La Mode, a different man from most men—one too big-calibered to be selling velvets, who ought to be making Panama Canals or electoral votes!" Deborah laughed reminiscently. "And I said—oh, at least once an evening for a week I said it—that it was so broadening for a girl to be in daily contact with such a man. (I had an idea that was about the style of remark the little cat at the office was using on Frank.) Well, believe me, Frank Satton sat up, and he fixed his weather eye on Deborah, and he never took it off till long after that girl left the office." Complacently Deborah flirted a polishing chamois over already dazzling nails. "And if you'd keep Gene guessing, he'd be too busy to take time to keep *you* guessing!"

"I am not guessing,"—haughtily. "I've offered him his ring back, but he won't take it."

"Catch me ever giving a ring back," scorned Deborah. "Why, I've still got a half-hoop of pearls and a fourth-carat diamond—only I don't dare let my little brother see me wearing them. He'd tell Frank."

Hetty's straight brown eyebrows drew primly together, disapproving of such tenacity in connection with emotional property. But Deborah cared little for other folks' disapproval. Reminiscently she continued: "And once when a pretty cousin from Ohio came to visit at Frank's home, I pretended right away that I was going into a vaudeville skit with a tall, dark-eyed movie supe that I knew. As if I really would"—derisively—"after Dean Hopper told me that when she toured Kansas with that stock-company she never got a bath except in a washbowl! And regularly four times a year she telegraphs home for a fare back. But Frank fumed and raved and was so unpleasant round home (his sister told me afterward) that the cousin cut her visit short."

Deborah laughed softly with pride and strolled to the time-clock. It was lunch-time. Hetty followed, smiling.



Gene said, among other things, that Huston was the punkest salesman the La Mode ever had the bad luck to get hold of.

"But I can't pretend very well," she objected soberly.

"You must," firmly declared Deborah. "You've simply got to give Mr. Gene Brudy a taste of his own medicine. I'm a friend of yours, and I'm a friend of Gene's, and I sha'n't stand by and watch you spoil your life and his. For likely as not, if he's left to himself, he'll run off with Pearl de Milde and marry her, or some one like her, in a spell of infatuation."

Hetty's gray eyes swiftly took on a queer, ominous cloudiness.

Deborah added quickly: "And he'd regret it at once and spend the rest of

his life longing for you."

Into Hetty's eyes came a queer, dubious expression.

"Maybe he would,"—vaguely. "But I'm sure that even if he married some one else, I'd continue to eat three meals a day."

THEY had reached a cafeteria. She emphasized her words by liberally heaping a tray with roast beef, suet pudding, baked potatoes and French pastry. Deborah made no rejoinder, because she was absorbed in heaping her own tray and getting it to a table—a difficult and delicate feat in a crowded place. But when they were seated and Deborah had peppered and salted her asparagus au gratin to her taste, she took up the conversation exactly where it had been left off—

a trick that she used on customers, sometimes to their confusion.

"Now listen to me, Hetty Bailey: If I hadn't known you so long, or if Gene and Frank weren't close friends, just like brothers, I wouldn't dream of interfering. But if Gene and Frank go into business together, as they sometimes plan, Gene's wife will be almost the same as my sister-in-law. I don't fancy Pearl de Milde being Frank's partner's wife and knowing all our business. I don't fancy anyone but you in that place, Hetty,"—with warm affection.

"I understand, Deborah," said Hetty, restlessly. "But really—"

Determinedly Deborah kept the floor. "You and Gene are perfectly congenial—when he behaves himself. I believe that he really loves you and merely philanders with the others. Frank says so too."

Hetty's green tub-silk shoulders twitched, as though she did not enjoy hearing that she had been discussed by Deborah and Frank Satton.

"I intend to see that you two are happy," went on Deborah positively. "Gene needs a lesson. He's going to get it."

"Deborah, please let us alone—"

"Hetty,"—kindly but imperiously,— "if you will listen to me, in three weeks Gene Brudy will be so busy wondering what you are doing that he won't have a minute to do anything himself. Get another man—"

"I couldn't," protested Hetty. "I don't know where—"

"Oh, look around," airily advised Deborah.

With a helpless air Hetty glanced around the cafeteria, filled to overflowing; there were plenty of men there—big, little, dyspeptic, hurried, worried, bovine, staring, self-absorbed.

"I don't know where there's any other man," complained Hetty.

"And then pretend—"

"I can't pretend. I wouldn't know how. You know I never did know how, Deborah."

Irritating visions of years gone by came to Deborah—years when tiny Hetty Bailey, cornered and accused of sneaking down the alley against maternal orders, never stood firm on the safe ground of denial but invariably whimpered out honest confession, incriminating Deborah as well as herself.

But she exclaimed: "Nonsense! You can if you try. And you've simply got to—for your own self-respect. Any man will do."

By this time they had emerged from the cafeteria, hunger appeased, and were walking down State Street. That great artery of humans throbbed audibly. In it could be found, doubtless, every variety of male known to St. Peter or census-taker—bum and banker, aviator and department-store basement salesman,

pickpocket and judge, motorman and traction magnate, chauffeur and Senator, newsboy and editor, shoestrapping vendor and consul.

Up and down the street Hetty stared vaguely, her pretty eyes skimming absently over the flutter of Derbies, Fedoras, caps, slouch brims, satin tiles and Panamas which, like leaves on a swift, troubled river, floated up, down and crisscross.

"I'm sure I don't know where there is another man," she repeated petulantly. "Anyway, I'm terribly busy just now. The rush is over for the rest of you, but I've orders to get right at next season's catalogues."

This exasperated Deborah. She told Florence Cully that afternoon that if Hetty Bailey wasn't her best friend, she'd say the girl was a fool.

"She more than half deserves her misfortunes,"—in disgust.

Florence agreed. "I should say so! I don't like to repeat what I hear over the wires—I'm afraid old Jolsky'll find out and fire me; but this morning I heard him break another date with her—and then 'phone up to make one with Pearl de Milde!"

BUT Deborah had a strong will. When she made up her mind to sell five dozen hats, she usually sold them. Having made up her mind to help a friend, whether that friend deserved to be helped or not, she persisted. Within two weeks she introduced Hetty, unwilling but necessitously acquiescent, since Deborah flatly refused to take no, to five men acquaintances of her own or vouched for by Frank Satton.

One, a promising young lawyer, did not follow up the introduction with any moves toward further acquaintance.

"But I'm not one bit surprised," exasperatedly cried Deborah. "You didn't act a bit as though you cared much for him."

"I didn't care—much," honestly and indifferently admitted Hetty.

Which so exasperated Deborah that she cruelly told Hetty what Florence had last heard over the switchboard. Hetty merely flushed faintly.

Another man, a more or less promis-

ing young architect, candidly told Deborah (when she insinuatingly 'phoned him the next morning) that her friend Hetty was a pretty little thing but stiff as a mummy, and life was too brief to be wasted over mummies. His plain speaking annoyed Deborah, but she realized his point of view, and also that of a third young chap whom Hetty eyed icily—after he spent ten dollars for theater-tickets for the four (Frank Satton was along)—merely because he afterward tried to kiss her when he said good night.

"What if he did?" demanded Deborah. "Will a kiss kill you?"

Hetty said nothing. But she said it so dignifiedly that Deborah was almost tempted to let her go her own foolish way.

But the next day a new salesman was taken on at the La Mode. Great luck, Deborah came rushing down to tell Hetty. Because now everything could be carried on right under Gene Brudy's nose.

"He's from Cincinnati. Florence told me so. And he isn't acquainted with anyone in town, and I saw right away that he'd be tickled to death to meet right away a nice girl to take around to shows and restaurants. Now, Hetty, *please*, do your part!"

Hetty stared uncordially at the tall, ordinary-looking man with rather thin black hair and neutral complexion whom Deborah presently introduced as Oliver Huston.

Afterward she said petulantly to Deborah: "I don't know what to do as my part. Anyway, Gene'll know that I'm doing it purposely."

"I told Mr. Huston that you wanted to meet him," irrelevantly remarked Deborah.

Hetty's sweet, pale face flamed as red as the carnation-wreathed sailor that she was copying for the advance advertising pages.

"Deborah Croise! How dared you! You had no right! He'll think I'm terrible."

"Pouf! No man ever thought a woman was terrible because she desired to meet his own estimable self," informed Deborah. "And I told him (in strict con-

fidence, of course, and made him promise not to tell you that I told him) that you had had a sort of affair with Gene Brudy, but you had heard stories of his gambling—"

"But Gene doesn't gamble," protested Hetty. "Why, he hardly ever even plays pool."

"Of course—I know. But I had to tell something, because everyone around the wholesale-house will be letting the man know that you belong to Gene. Could I say right out that Gene treats you disgracefully and you are trying to pay him back in his own coin?"

"Certainly not!" Hetty's cheeks were scarlet. "But you didn't have to say anything at all! Deborah, I wish you'd leave me alone."

Deborah wearily told Florence Cully: "And that was all the thanks I got for fairly begging the man to ask her to join me and Frank at the Edelmarck Garden, Saturday evening."

COQUETRY is a slow-growing flower unless Nature herself has planted it from her own select seed. Afterward Deborah said that she actually wasted an entire season's selling energy compelling Hetty to lead Oliver Huston on to devote himself to her. Huston himself was not unwilling. But Deborah had to plead, order, cajole, taunt and goad Hetty into acting flirtatious whether she felt like it or not.

After the first evening Hetty conceded unenthusiastically that the man was not objectionable. With that small encouragement, Deborah at once enthusiastically arranged more evenings that would see the four together.

Hetty objected. "I'm busy, Deborah. Anyway, Gene will think I'm doing it just for effect and laugh at me."

This was said with a whimper that irritated Deborah. "He won't know unless you tell him," she snapped. "Are you intending to?"

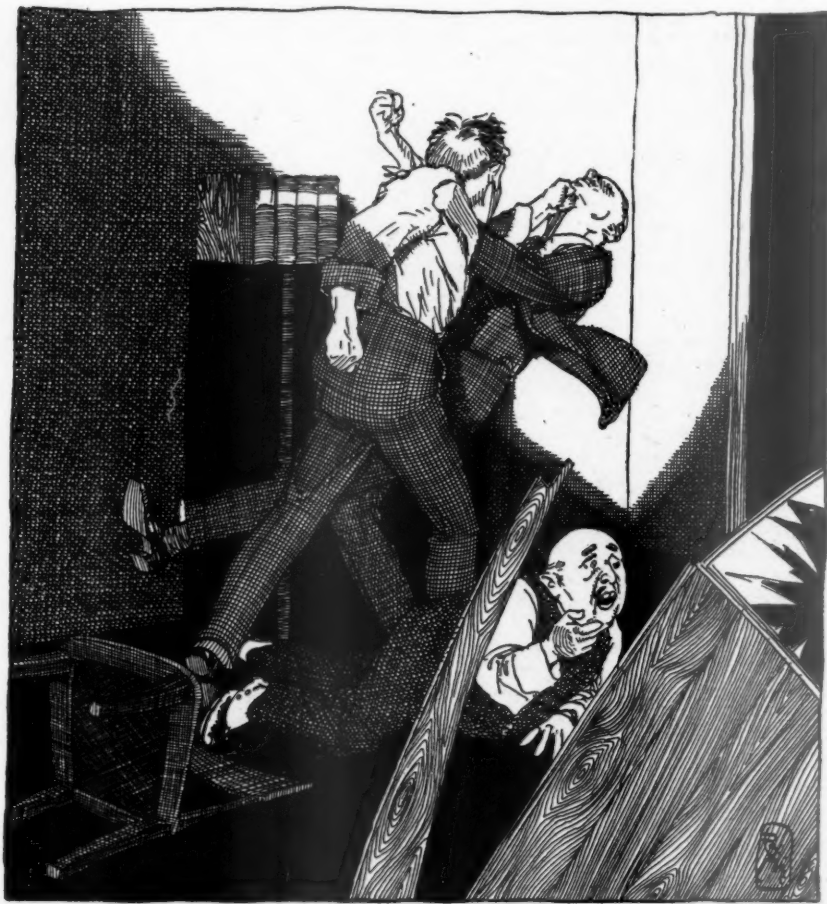
"No, of course not."

A few days later Deborah stifled a chuckle. Gene Brudy began to wear a peculiarly thoughtful expression, and Florence told her (under seal of strict secrecy, for President Jolsky had a swift, ominous way of dealing with talkative

telephone-operators, and Florence's aquiline profile involuntarily grew rigid with apprehension whenever the gnarled, bald head went through the main office) that Pearl de Milde had heard about the

Hetty was reluctant to tell. "He didn't say much,"—industriously sharpening a pencil that had broken on the rosette of an intricate imported toque.

Deborah insisted upon hearing. So



"Of course Huston hit back, and then they lunged together. And the glass partition was right in their way, and so of course they smashed right through it. And old President Jolsky had fallen asleep in his swivel chair, and he didn't know anything was happening till they and the busted frosted glass fell all over him and knocked him and his chair to the floor."

social evening at the Eidelmarck and had taken it upon herself to 'phone down particulars to Gene.

"I thought I could depend on Pearl to hear and tell," snickered Deborah to herself, and forthwith she sought Hetty to ask eagerly what Gene had said.

at last Hetty hesitatingly confided that Gene said, among other things, that Huston was the punkest salesman the La Mode ever had the bad luck to get hold of, and that all his—Gene's—attentions to Pearl de Milde or anyone else had been quite accidental or incidental

or—oh, confound it! any-word that best expressed attentions of no consequence, no meaning, nothing!

Deborah laughed in delight. Hetty was grave.

"Now, Hetty,"—in sudden alarm,—
"you wont back down? You know, he needs a long, hard lesson!"

"Ye-e-s. But he feels bad. I—I am ashamed."

"Hetty Bailey! After the way he has treated you!"

"I know,"—plaintively. "He has treated me shabbily. But I know, too, that he likes me best, and I am afraid it will hurt him if I—"

"Oh, Hetty Bailey, you certainly hurt me!" screamed Deborah.

Thoughtfully Hetty tore several good sheets of drawing-paper into fragments. Thoughtfully she dropped them, one fragment at a time, into the wastebasket, before she said, absently and irrelevantly: "I really ought to work to-night instead of going to a show with you folks. Six pages of street-hats have to be at the printers' by Thursday noon."

"It's Montgomery and Stone, and Oliver got seats in the fifth row on the center aisle," said Deborah coldly. "I myself don't think it is decent to let a man pay two dollars for a ticket and then waste it."

Hetty yielded to the argument.

IT was an excellent show, she admitted later, and a gay evening. Frank Sat-ton was in a boisterous mood. So was Oliver Huston. Hetty could not help showing some result of Deborah's coaching—or else the gayety of the other three was infectious.

Also it was an effective evening. For early the next morning Gene Brudy, wearing a haughty, injured expression, stalked into the office and over to Hetty's desk. He ignored Deborah, who, interested and frankly eavesdropping, strolled over too.

"I thought you told me yesterday afternoon, Hetty," he said sarcastically, "that you'd have to work last evening."

Deborah, suppressing a smile, looked at Hetty with some anxiety. You never could tell what that unwise, undissembling girl would blurt. But for once

in her life Hetty said the right thing in the right way, Deborah conceded.

"I—I did intend to work on some sketches," she answered with a blush (Deborah could have patted her on the back for the effective guilty pinkness of countenance). "But—I changed my mind."

"So I was informed," heavily and bitterly said Gene Brudy, and he stalked away.

As he went, Deborah chuckled. But Hetty was sober. She looked after him wistfully. "I'm afraid he feels bad," she said regretfully.

"Can you beat it?" disgustedly Deborah later asked Florence.

BUT as the days went on, Deborah knew that there followed other and more amusing passages between Hetty and Gene. Hetty did not relate these passages. But errand-girls heard as they passed, or Florence got an inkling over the switchboard. With satisfaction Deborah saw that Hetty, though slowly and blunderingly, was learning the great old game of playing one man against another. More than once, too, Deborah caught a suppressed snap in Hetty's pretty gray eyes; twice it was a subdued but obvious sparkle when Huston happened to be leaning over her desk while Gene was passing through the office. Also Hetty confessed with demure pride that her catalogue-work had been considered the best of several seasons. Something had put vim into it.

Then Deborah found that she had to take her two weeks' vacation then or do without. She hated to go—for the first time in her life, she told Florence. "Hetty is just getting started on the right track. I'm afraid she'll switch before I get back. Still, one can't sacrifice oneself entirely for one's friends. And if I don't get away for two weeks between seasons, I'm simply a rag the rest of the year and my sales show the effect. But I hate to leave Hetty. I don't mind leaving Frank; I always think that he appreciates me more after a few weeks' absence. He knows there are always a few men at a summer resort."

"You should worry about Hetty,"

scorned Florence, relaxing her attention to several plugs. "Take it from me, Deborah, she needs very little help any more. Between Gene 'phoning her and Oliver 'phoning her and Pearl de Milde 'phoning, the La Mode has mighty hard work to get the line long enough to transact its own business."

DEBORAH cut her two weeks short by a day and a half.

On her way home from the station she breezed into the wholesale house, to hear how matters had progressed while she was gone. She was blithe and buoyant. "There's nothing like a good rest to tone you up," she bubbled at Florence, pausing by the switchboard. "I stayed at a perfectly lovely hotel. It had the most elegant orchestra—the violinist told me all about how he couldn't get on with his wife. Isn't there something fascinating about a violinist? And Florence, you may not believe it, but I never got in bed one night till four o'clock. But I couldn't dance the last two nights, because I'd worn out every pair of silk stockings I took along, and I took all I could afford to buy. How's everything here, and everybody?"—brightly and breathlessly.

If Deborah had not talked so fast, she might have noticed sooner that Florence's manner was perfunctory to coldness. As it was, she ran out of breath before she perceived that the aquiline profile was slightly averted and too grim for cordiality.

"What's the matter, Florence? Headache?"

"No!" Florence glared at her. "But the whole La Mode's got a headache! The way President Jolsky talked!"

"My goodness, what about?"

It was Florence's turn to take a long breath and then talk fast and hard.

"Well, my dear Deborah, you certainly did something when you made your friend Hetty acquainted with Oliver Huston! It certainly was a bright little trouble-making idea of yours!"

"I knew it," cried Deborah. "I knew that girl would do something silly the minute I got away. *What* did she do?"

"Hetty? Not a thing—except just what you hoped she would do. She sat at her desk and looked at Huston with a perfectly foolish come-hither look."

"Well?"

"Well!" snapped Florence. "About two hours after you left, Gene Brudy began to stalk around after Huston with a get-out-of-my-way look."

Deborah giggled.

"Don't laugh yet," dryly advised Florence. "Huston"—with a glumness of mien that began to strike Deborah as queer for Florence, when other people's woes were concerned—"never looked at Gene with any kind of a look. He just sort of seemed to glance over him. Besides, the man hardly ever took his eyes off Hetty. You know, Deborah Croise, that's the worst of meddling in other people's business."

"Really, Florence—" began Deborah.

"You fix up a nice little scheme, but you never can tell if that scheme will work out the way you've fixed it to work."

"What—"

"You didn't plan, did you," acridly queried Florence, "for Oliver Huston to go around spreading the story that Gene was a low-down vicious gambler who nearly ruined that sweet Hetty's life?"

"Why, of course not."

"Well, that's just what he did. Also he went around tenderly wearing Hetty's picture in his watch. Gene went around vowing he'd smash the watch and Huston's nose at the same time. What did Hetty do?"—sarcastically, to Deborah's wide eyes. "Oh, she just sat around nervously and plaintively hoped there wouldn't be any trouble between the two men just over her! It's the queerest thing that these quiet, plaintive girls can stir up the most trouble over themselves! And then some one told Gene—and I'll take an oath"—excitedly—"I never 'phoned up to Pearl as I was accused of doing! At least if I did it, I don't remember doing it. But some way Gene heard about the gambling story."

"Well! He jumped Huston about it—right in front of President Jolsky's office. I'm sure I can't understand why folks have frosted-glass partitions in offices when they could just as well have

solid plastered walls! You can't shove a man right through a plastered wall like you can through a frosted-glass partition! You see, Huston wouldn't stand for Gene's terribly insulting remarks, and he told him to shut up and move on. Gene yelled, 'I'll move you on!' and hit him. Of course Huston hit back, and then they lunged together. And the glass partition was right in their way, and so of course they smashed right through it. And old President Jolsky had fallen asleep in his swivel chair, and he didn't know anything was happening till they and the busted frosted glass fell all over him and knocked him and his chair to the floor.

"And then—say, wouldn't you think that would have frightened them and they'd have quit?" angrily demanded Florence. "Well, it didn't! They kept right on! Fighting! They fought right over old Jolsky whimpering and screeching on the floor under them, and right through his office and right through the next glass partition into the cashier's compartment, and poor old Heine got

knocked off his high chair and one of 'em stepped on him—and broke two of his ribs; he's in the hospital now. And if the other salesmen hadn't got some gumption by that time and rushed and yanked 'em apart, they'd have gone through all the partitions on the main floor and they'd be fighting yet!"

"Oh, goodness gracious!" Deborah's eyes were dilated.

"WAIT. You haven't heard it all," said Florence with a peculiar maliciousness in her voice. "Old Jolsky was furious, besides being gashed by two pieces of glass. And he said they had to pay for all the glass. The floor was simply covered. And frosted glass has gone up since the war. Both Gene and Huston, too, got cut frightfully. But they didn't care. They glared right through their blood at each other, and Gene told old Jolsky to go to the devil; he wouldn't sell La Mode goods another day unless Huston was kicked out of the house. And Huston told old Jolsky he'd pay for the measly glass, but he went

back to Cincinnati that minute unless Gene Brudy was fired instantly. And you know Jolsky is short of salesmen this season anyway; so he said quick never mind the glass and begged 'em both to stay. But neither would."

"I—I wish I'd been here," cried Deborah anxiously.

"So do I!" snapped Florence violently—so violently that Deborah started. "Because some one told old Jolsky that one of the girls here was responsible for all the trouble between the two men, and he got the idea that it was *me*! The things that old beast said to me! I never before took much interest in that suffrage and downtrodden-women business, but after that old brute got through talking to me, I was ready for anything! I made up my mind then and there that I'd be at the polls next election-day to cast a vote!



"Good!" vivaciously exclaimed Deborah. "Good! That repays me for anything, Hetty dear."

I'll show him! Saying that he'd fire me out of the place so quick it'd make my head swim, but what was the use, for any other girl he'd hire would likely snoop and listen and tattle just the same!"

"G-good gracious!" gasped Deborah.

"But let me tell you, I didn't let old Jolsky go away with any false impression, my dear Deborah!" informed Florence spitefully. "I told him plainly *you* were to blame. I'm sorry, Deborah, but I fear you may not sell La Mode hats this season."

Deborah gasped, struggled for speech.

"Why, the idea! Why, I'll tell him—oh, well, I dare say I can exist away from the La Mode. Possibly a mere 'phone-operator might find it hard to get another good position, but a clever saleswoman needn't worry! And if I've helped Hetty to be happy, I can endure a few ill-tempered words from Jolsky."

"Is that so?"—coldly. "By the way, if you're looking for Hetty, she isn't here. She went home with a nervous headache the day it happened, and she hasn't been back. And I guess she isn't coming back. Says she's too upset and ashamed. That's another thing Jolsky's raving over. The catalogue will be late."

"Would it be too much trouble for you to give me her home number?" acidly asked Deborah.

At once, with what seemed a most peculiar satisfaction, Florence pulled out one plug and inserted another. "Here it is,"—sweetly.

"Deborah?" replied Hetty to her friend's "Hello." "Back so soon? N-no, I couldn't come back after that terrible scene. It was awful. . . . No, I know you didn't mean it to turn out that way. . . . Y-yes,"—from the self-consciousness of the tremulous, hesitant gentle voice, Deborah knew that Hetty's gentle face was pink,—"*everything* is all right, I guess. I—I'm going to be married next week."

"Good!" vivaciously exclaimed Deborah. "Good! That repays me for anything, Hetty dear."

HETTY'S voice, tremulous, gentle but undeniably happy, broke in: "Though I wouldn't dream of it so soon,

if Oliver wasn't returning to Cincinnati right away."

"Oliver!" shrieked Deborah, forgetting Florence, who was smiling broadly and maliciously. "Surely you mean Gene—"

"Of course not,"—gently. "I mean Oliver. I was surprised, though, to learn that—that my feeling for Gene wasn't so strong as I had believed."

"Hetty Bailey, I am dumfounded!"

"But why?"—in gentle surprise. "Surely you could tell, before you went away, from my manner—"

"I thought you were pretending!"

"Why, Deborah,"—gently,—"*you* know I—I couldn't pretend."

Deborah put up the receiver. Florence smiled—meanly. Icily Deborah asked to be connected with Frank Satton.

"Deborah?" said Frank. "Back already? Sure—I'll be out to your house at seven. But say, my dear girl! You certainly did something when you meddled in Gene Brudy's affairs! Here he refuses to speak to me any longer! Wont listen to any explanation! Blames me for your nosiness!"

"My nosiness!" snapped Deborah.

Deborah flung up that receiver and flounced away.

But a light flashed on the board, and Florence called her back.

"Hetty has more to say. —Yes, Hetty, she's still here."

Coldly Deborah took the receiver to hear what more Hetty had to say. And this is what she heard. (And so likely did Florence, for how can an operator help hearing when her ears are dutifully attached to her switchboard?) "Deborah, I hate to say this, but—but don't make any future engagements for me, please." Again that little gentle, embarrassed laugh. Was it dislike of it that curled up Deborah's nose? "Because Oliver was always rather resentful of your dragging me around evenings whether I was busy or not. And anyway he—he doesn't—he—"

"I gather that Oliver doesn't care for engagements that include me!" snapped Deborah. Florence giggled audibly.

"Well, I—I can't pretend, Deborah," faltered Hetty.

"Don't try!" cried Deborah.

B

AREE came of fighting stock. His sire was Kazan himself—Kazan the formidable wolf-dog who had once killed a man in defense of his beloved mistress and who had finally thrown off his human bondage and gone back to the wild. And Baree's dam was Gray Wolf, who had fought a savage Canadian lynx in desperate but unavailing defense of Baree's older brothers and sisters, and had been blinded in the encounter.

To Baree, for many days after he was born, the world was a vast, gloomy cavern. During these first days of his life his home was in the heart of a great windfall of dead timber, where Gray Wolf, his blind mother, had found a safe nest for his babyhood, and to which Kazan, her mate, came only now and then, his eyes gleaming like strange balls of greenish fire in the darkness.

When Baree was three weeks old, however, he one day struggled out of the windfall and got his first glimpse of the sun and the forest without—a primeval forest three hundred miles north of the first town. And at dawn of the next day Kazan brought

in a rabbit still kicking and allowed Baree to finish off the dying creature and join in the feast that followed.

So Baree came to understand that to eat meant to kill, and as other days and nights passed, there grew in him swiftly the hunger for flesh. In this he was the true wolf. From Kazan he had taken other and stronger inheritances of the dog. He was magnificently black, which in later days gave him the name of *Kusketa Mohekum*—the black wolf. On his breast was a white star. His right ear was tipped with white. His tail, at six weeks, was bushy and hung low. It was a wolf's tail. His ears were Gray Wolf's ears—sharp, short, pointed, always alert. His fore-shoulders gave promise of being splendidly like Kazan's, and when he stood up he was like the trace-dog, except that he always stood

sidewise to the point or object he was watching. This, again, was the wolf, for a dog faces the direction in which he is looking intently.

NOW came the time when Baree was to face life unaided. He was only nine weeks old when one day he wandered out of sight of the windfall and fell afoul of Papayuchisew, a big young owl. The two baby flesh-eaters quickly came to blows—or to be precise, to the owl's fastening his beak in Baree's nose and to the wolf-dog's getting a grip on the owl's leg. Viciously they fought, and only when they fell over the high bank of a forest stream into a deep pool did the battle come to an end.

Sore and half-drowned, Baree struggled to shore on the side of the stream away from the windfall. And when he recovered his strength and sought to make his way home again, he only wandered farther into the forest.

For some time poor little Baree had a hard time indeed, and barely kept himself alive by catching crawfish until one day he followed a bear fishing along the stream and

learned to subsist by raiding the bear's caches of surplus fish.

And then came Baree's first contact with man—a moment of utmost peril. For he wandered into the domain of Pierrot the trapper, who since the death of the Indian princess who had been his wife, had lived alone with his beautiful daughter Nepeese—"the Willow."

Standing behind a clump of balsams, Pierrot and Nepeese caught sight of Baree. The trapper raised his rifle, but "the Willow" caught his arm and whispered: "Let me shoot."

With a low chuckle Pierrot gave the gun to her. He counted the whelp as already dead. For Nepeese, at that distance, could send a bullet into an inch square nine times out of ten. And Nepeese, aiming carefully at Baree, pressed her brown forefinger upon the trigger.



The
Opening
Installment
of "A Son
of Kazan"



A Son of Kazan

A new novel of the Great Outdoors

By James Oliver Curwood

Author of "Kazan," "The Grizzly," etc.

CHAPTER V

AS the Willow pulled the trigger of her rifle, Baree sprang into the air. He felt the force of the bullet before he heard the report of the gun. It lifted him off his feet, and then sent him rolling over and over as if he had been struck a hideous blow with a club. For a flash he did not feel pain. Then it ran through him like a knife of fire, and with that pain the dog in him rose above the wolf, and he let out a wild outcry of puppyish yapping as he rolled and twisted on the ground.

Pierrot and Nepeese had stepped from behind the balsams, the Willow's beautiful eyes shining with pride at the accuracy of her shot. Instantly she caught her breath. Her brown fingers clutched at the barrel of her rifle. The chuckle of satisfaction died on Pierrot's lips as Baree's cries of pain filled the forest.

"*Uchi Moosis!*" gasped Nepeese, in her Cree.

Pierrot caught the rifle from her.

"*Diable!* A dog—a puppy!" he cried.

He started on a run for Baree. But

in their amazement they had lost a few seconds, and Baree's dazed senses were returning. He saw them clearly as they came across the open—a new kind of monster of the forests! With a final wail he darted back into the deep shadows of the trees. It was almost sunset, and he ran for the thick gloom of the heavy spruce near the creek. He had shivered at sight of the bear and the moose, but for the first time he now sensed the real meaning of danger. And it was close after him. He could hear the crashing of the two-legged beasts in pursuit; strange cries were almost at his heels—and then suddenly he plunged without warning into a hole.

It was a shock to have the earth go out from under his feet like that, but Baree did not yelp. The wolf was dominant in him again. It urged him to remain where he was, making no move, no sound—scarcely breathing. The voices were over him; the strange feet almost stumbled in the hole where he lay. Looking out of his dark hiding-place, he could see one of his enemies. It was Nepeese, the Willow. She was



ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK B. HOFFMAN

standing so that a last glow of the day fell upon her face. Baree did not take his eyes from her. Above his pain there rose in him a strange and thrilling fascination. The girl put her two hands to her mouth, and in a voice that was soft and plaintive and amazingly comforting to his terrified little heart, cried:

"Uchimoo—Uchimoo—Uchimoo!"

And then he heard another voice; and this voice, too, was far less terrible than many sounds he had listened to in the forests.

"We cannot find him, Nepeese," the voice was saying. "He has crawled off to die. It is too bad. Come."

Where Baree had stood in the edge of the open, Pierrot paused and pointed to a birch sapling that had been cut clean off by the Willow's bullet. Nepeese understood. The sapling, no larger than her thumb, had turned her shot a trifle and had saved Baree from instant death.

She turned again, and called:

"Uchimoo—Uchimoo—Uchimoo!"

Her eyes were no longer filled with the thrill of slaughter.

"He would not understand that,"

said Pierrot, leading the way across the open. "He is wild—born of the wolves. Perhaps he was of Koomo's lead-bitch, who ran away to hunt with the packs last winter."

"And he will die—"

"Ayetun—yes, he will die."

But Baree had no idea of dying. He was too tough a youngster to be shocked to death by a bullet passing through the soft flesh of his fore-leg. That was what had happened. His leg was torn to the bone, but the bone itself was untouched. He waited until the moon had risen before he crawled out of his hole.

His leg had grown stiff then; it had stopped bleeding, but his whole body was racked by a terrible pain. A dozen Papayuchisews, all holding tight to his ears and nose, could not have hurt him more. Every time he moved, a sharp twinge shot through him; and yet he persisted in moving. Instinctively he felt that by traveling away from the hole he would get away from danger. This was the best thing that could have happened to him, for a little later a porcupine came wandering along, chattering to itself in its foolish, good-humored way, and fell with a fat thud into the hole. Had Baree remained, he would have been so full of quills that he must surely have died.



Baree had not killed, but he had conquered. His first great day—or night—had come. The world was filled with a new promise for him, as vast as the night itself. And after a moment he sat back on his haunches, sniffing the air for his beaten enemy; and then, as if defying the feathered monster to come back and fight to the end, he pointed his sharp muzzle up to the stars and sent forth his first wolf-howl into the night.

In another way the exercise of travel was good for Baree. It gave his wound no opportunity to "set," as Pierrot would have said, for in reality his hurt was more painful than serious. For the first hundred yards he hobbled along on three legs, and after that he found that he could use his fourth by humoring it a great deal. He followed the creek for a half-mile. Whenever a bit of brush touched his wound, he would snap at it viciously, and instead of whimpering when he felt one of the sharp twinges shooting through him, an angry little growl gathered in his throat, and his teeth clicked. Now that he was out of the hole, the effect of the Willow's shot was stirring every drop of wolf blood in his body. In him there was a growing animosity—a feeling of rage not against any one thing in particular, but against all things. It was not the feeling with which he had fought Papayuchisew, the young owl. On this night the dog in him had disappeared. An accumulation of misfortunes had descended upon him, and out of these misfortunes—and his present hurt—the wolf had risen savage and vengeful.

This was the first night Baree had traveled. He was, for the time, unafraid of anything that might creep up on him out of the darkness. The blackest shadows had lost their thrill. It was the first big fight between the two natures that were born in him,—the wolf and the dog,—and the dog was vanquished. Now and then he stopped to lick his wound, and as he licked it he growled, as though for the hurt itself he held a personal antagonism. If Pierrot could have seen and heard, he would have understood very quickly, and he would have said: "Let him die. The club will never take that devil out of him."

IN this humor Baree came, an hour later, out of the heavy timber of the creek-bottom into the more open spaces of a small plain that ran along the foot of a ridge. It was in this plain that Oohoomisew hunted. Oohoomisew was a huge snow-owl. He was the patriarch among all the owls of Pierrot's trapping domain. He was so old that he was almost blind, and therefore he never

hunted as other owls hunted. He did not hide himself in the black cover of spruce and balsam-tops, or float softly through the night, ready in an instant to swoop down upon his prey. His eyesight was so poor that from a spruce-top he could not have seen a rabbit at all, and he might have mistaken a fox for a mouse.

So old Oohoomisew, learning wisdom from experience, hunted from ambush. He would squat on the ground, and for hours at a time he would remain there without making a sound and scarcely moving a feather, waiting with the patience of Job for something to eat to come his way. Now and then he had made mistakes. Twice he had mistaken a lynx for a rabbit, and in the second attack he had lost a foot, so that when he slumbered aloft during the day he hung to his perch with one claw. Crippled, nearly blind, and so old that he had long ago lost the tufts of feathers over his ears, he was still a giant in strength, and when he was angry, one could hear the snap of his beak twenty yards away.

For three nights he had been unlucky, and to-night he had been particularly unfortunate. Two rabbits had come his way, and he had lunged at each of them from his cover. The first he had missed entirely; the second had left with him a mouthful of fur—and that was all. He was ravenously hungry, and he was gritting his bill in his bad temper when he heard Baree approaching.

Even if Baree could have seen under the dark bush ahead, and had discovered Oohoomisew ready to dart from his ambush, it is not likely that he would have gone very far aside. His own fighting blood was up. He too was ready for war.

Very indistinctly Oohoomisew saw him at last, coming across the little open which he was watching. He squatted down. His feathers ruffled up until he was like a ball. His almost-sightless eyes glowed like two bluish pools of fire. Ten feet away, Baree stopped for a moment and licked his wound. Oohoomisew waited cautiously. Again Baree advanced, passing within six feet of the bush. With a swift hop and a sudden thunder of his powerful wings the great owl was upon him.

This time Baree let out no cry of pain or of fright. The wolf is *kipichi-mao*, as the Indians say. No hunter ever heard a trapped wolf whine for mercy at the sting of a bullet or the beat of a club. He dies with his fangs bared. To-night it was a wolf-whelp that Oohoomisew was attacking, and not a dog-pup. The owl's first rush keeled Baree over, and for a moment he was smothered under the huge outspread wings, while Oohoomisew—pinioning him down—hopped for a claw-hold with his one good foot, and struck fiercely with his beak.

One blow of that beak anywhere about the head would have settled for a rabbit, but at the first thrust Oohoomisew discovered that it was not a rabbit he was holding under his wings. A blood-curdling snarl answered the blow, and Oohoomisew remembered the lynx, his lost foot and his narrow escape with his life. The old pirate might have beaten a retreat, but Baree was no longer the puppyish Baree of that hour in which he had fought young Papayuchisew. Experience and hardship had aged and strengthened him; his jaws had passed quickly from the bone-licking to the bone-cracking age—and before Oohoomisew could get away, if he was thinking of flight at all, Baree's fangs closed with a vicious snap on his one good leg.

In the stillness of night there rose a still greater thunder of wings, and for a few moments Baree closed his eyes to keep from being blinded by Oohoomisew's furious blows. But he hung on grimly, and as his teeth met through the flesh of the old night-pirate's leg, his angry snarl carried defiance to Oohoomisew's ears. Rare good fortune had given him that grip on the leg, and Baree knew that triumph or defeat depended on his ability to hold it. The old owl had no other claw to sink into him, and it was impossible—caught as he was—for him to tear at Baree with his beak. So he continued to beat that thunder of blows with his four-foot wings.

The wings made a great tumult about Baree, but they did not hurt him. He buried his fangs deeper. His snarls rose more fiercely as he got the taste of Oohoomisew's blood, and through him

there surged more hotly the desire to kill this monster of the night, as though in the death of this creature he had the opportunity of avenging himself for all the hurts and hardships that had befallen him since he lost his mother.

Oohoomisew had never felt a great fear until now. The lynx had snapped at him but once—and was gone, leaving him crippled. But the lynx had not snarled in that wolfish way, and it had not hung on. A thousand and one nights Oohoomisew had listened to the wolf-howl. Instinct had told him what it meant. He had seen the packs pass swiftly through the night, and always when they passed he had kept in the deepest shadows. To him, as for all other wild things, the wolf-howl stood for death. But until now, with Baree's fangs buried in his leg, he had never sensed fully the wolf-fear. It had taken it years to enter into his slow, stupid head—but now that it was there, it possessed him as no other thing had ever possessed him in all his life.

Suddenly Oohoomisew ceased his beating and launched himself upward. Like huge fans his powerful wings churned the air, and Baree felt himself lifted suddenly from the earth. Still he held on—and in a moment both bird and beast fell back with a thud.

Oohoomisew tried again. This time he was more successful, and he rose fully six feet into the air with Baree. They fell again. A third time the old outlaw fought to wing himself free of Baree's grip; and then, exhausted, he lay with his giant wings outspread, hissing and cracking his bill.

Under those wings Baree's mind worked with the swift instincts of the killer. Suddenly he changed his hold, burying his fangs into the under part of Oohoomisew's body. They sank into three inches of feathers. Swift as Baree had been, Oohoomisew was equally swift to take advantage of his opportunity. In an instant he had swooped upward. There was a jerk, a rending of feathers from flesh—and Baree was alone on the field of battle.

Baree had not killed, but he had conquered. His first great day—or night—had come. The world was filled with a

new promise for him, as vast as the night itself. And after a moment he sat back on his haunches, sniffing the air for his beaten enemy; and then, as if defying the feathered monster to come back and fight to the end, he pointed his sharp little muzzle up to the stars and sent forth this first babyish wolf-howl into the night.

CHAPTER VI

BAREE'S fight with Oohoomisew was good medicine for him. It not only gave him great confidence in himself, but it also cleared the fever of ugliness from his blood. He no longer snapped and snarled at things as he went on through the night.

It was a wonderful night. The moon was straight overhead, and the sky was filled with stars, so that in the open spaces the light was almost like that of day, except that it was softer and more beautiful. It was very still. There was no wind in the tree-tops, and it seemed to Baree that the howl he had given must have echoed to the end of the world.

Baree, like the young wolf seeking new hunting-grounds, or the young fox discovering a new world, had no reason or method in his wandering. He was simply "traveling"—going on. He wanted something which he could not find.

the wild as soon as it is able to care for itself—nature's scheme, perhaps, for doing away with too close family relations and possibly dangerous interbreeding. Baree, like the young wolf seeking new hunting-grounds, or the young fox discovering a new world, had no reason or method in his wandering. He was simply "traveling"—going on. He wanted something which he could not find. The wolf-note brought it to him.

The stars and the moon filled Baree with a yearning for this something. The distant sounds impinged upon him his great aloneness. And instinct told him that only by questing could he find. It

Now and then Baree heard a sound—and always he stopped, attentive and listening. Far away he heard the long, soft mooing of a cow moose; he heard a great splashing in the water of a small lake that he came to, and once there came to him the sharp cracking of horn against horn—two bucks settling a little difference of opinion a quarter of a mile away. But it was always the wolf-howl that made him sit and listen longest, his heart beating with a strange impulse which he did not as yet understand. It was the call of his breed, growing in him slowly but insistently.

He was still a wanderer—*pupamootao*, the Indians call it. It is this "wander spirit" that inspires for a time nearly every creature of

was not so much Kazan and Gray Wolf that he missed now—not so much motherhood and home as it was companionship. Now that he had fought the wolfish rage out of him in his battle with Oohoomisew, the dog part of him had come into its own again—the lovable half of him, the part that wanted to snuggle up near something that was alive and friendly, small odds whether it wore feathers or fur, was clawed or hooved.

He was sore from the Willow's bullet, and he was sore from battle, and toward dawn he lay down under a shelter of alders at the edge of a second small lake and rested until midday. Then he began questing in the reeds and close to the pond-lilies for food. He found a dead jackfish, partly eaten by a mink, and finished it.

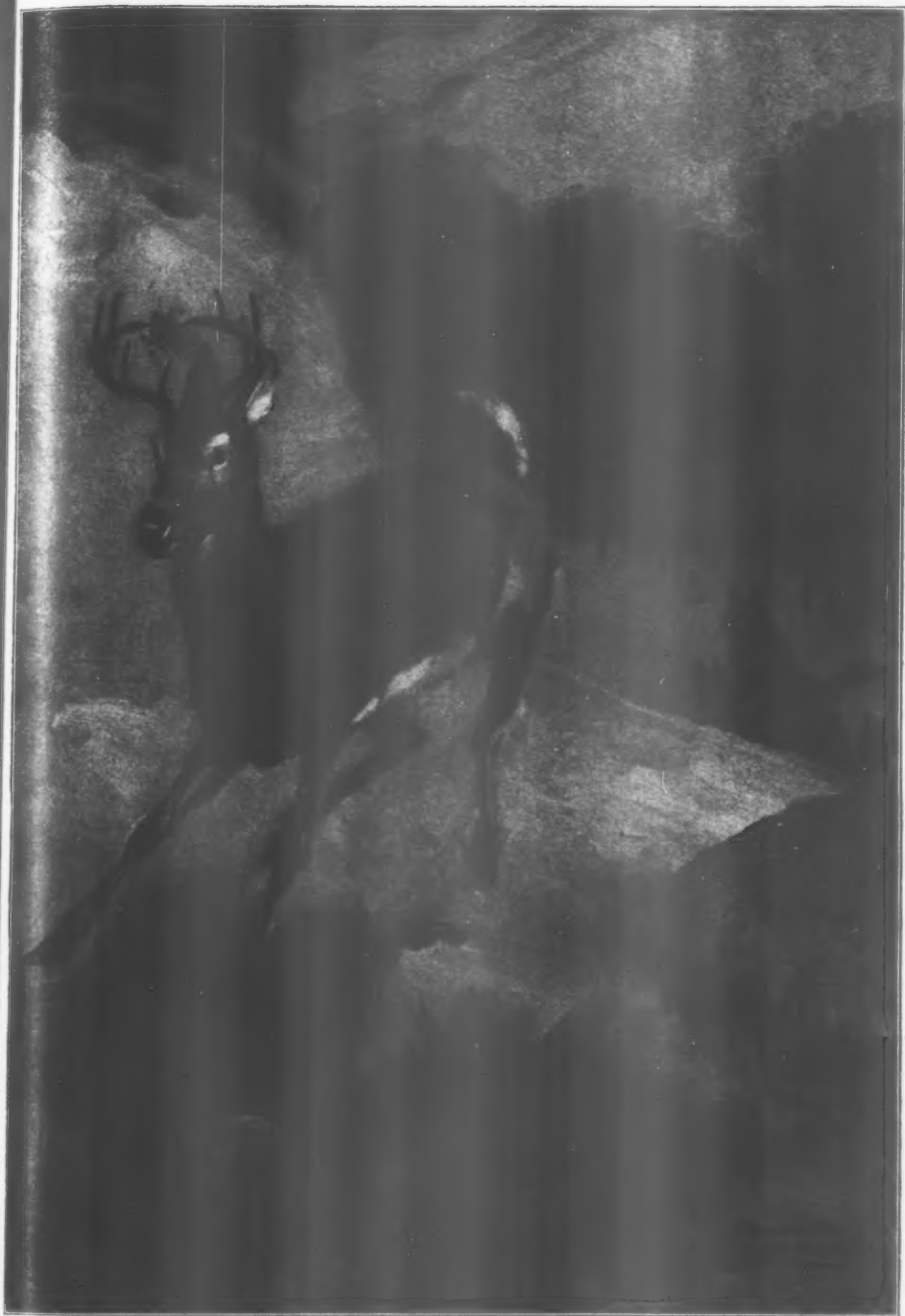
His wound was much less painful this afternoon, and by nightfall he scarcely noticed it at all. Since his almost tragic end at the hands of Nepee, he had been traveling in a general northeasterly direction, following instinctively the run of the waterways; but his progress had been slow, and when darkness came again he was not more than eight or ten miles from the hole into which he had fallen after the Willow had shot him.

Baree did not travel far this night. The fact that his wound had come with dusk, and his fight with Oohoomisew still later, filled him with caution. Experience had taught him that the dark shadows and the black pits in the forest were possible ambushes of danger. He was no longer afraid, as he had once been, but he had had fighting enough for a time, and so he accepted circumspection as the better part of valor and held himself aloof from the perils of darkness. It was a strange instinct that made him seek his bed on the top of a huge rock up which he had some difficulty in climbing. Perhaps it was a harkening back to the days of long ago when Gray Wolf, in her first motherhood, sought refuge at the summit of the Sun Rock which towered high above the forest-world of which she and Kazan were a part, and where later she was blinded in her battle with the lynx.

Baree's rock, instead of rising for a hundred feet or more straight up, was

possibly as high as a man's head. It was in the edge of the creek-bottom, with the spruce forest close at his back. For many hours he did not sleep, but lay keenly alert, his ears tuned to catch every sound that came out of the dark world about him. There was more than curiosity in his alertness to-night. His education had broadened immensely in one way: he had learned that he was a very small part of all this wonderful earth that lay under the stars and the moon, and he was keenly alive with the desire to become better acquainted with it without any more fighting or hurt. To-night he knew what it meant when he saw now and then gray shadows float silently out of the forest into the moonlight—the owls, monsters of the breed with which he had fought. He heard the crackling of hooved feet and the smashing of heavy bodies in the underbrush. He heard again the mooring of the moose. Voices came to him that he had not heard before—the sharp *yap-yap-yap* of a fox, the unearthly, laughing cry of a great Northern loon on a lake half a mile away, the scream of a lynx that came floating through miles of forest, the low, soft croaks of the nighthawks between himself and the stars. He heard strange whisperings in the tree-tops—whisperings of the winds; and once, in the heart of a dead stillness, a buck whistled shrilly close behind his rock—and at the wolf-scent in the air shot away in a terror-stricken gray streak.

All these sounds held their new meaning for Baree. Swiftly he was coming into his knowledge of the wilderness. His eyes gleamed; his blood thrilled. For many minutes at a time he scarcely moved. But of all the sounds that came to him, the wolf-cry thrilled him most. Again and again he listened to it. At times it was far away, so far that it was like a whisper, dying away almost before it reached him; and then again it would come to him full-throated, hot with the breath of the chase, calling him to the red thrill of the hunt, to the wild orgy of torn flesh and running blood—calling, calling, calling. That was it, calling him to his own kin, to the bone of his bone and the flesh of his flesh—to the wild, fierce hunting-packs of his



Of all the sounds that came to Barea, the wolf-cry thrilled him most. It came to him full-throated, hot with the breath of the chase, calling him to the red thrill of the hunt, to the wild orgy of torn flesh and running blood—calling, calling, calling. That was it, calling him to his own kin, to the bone of his bone and the flesh of his flesh—to the wild, fierce hunting-packs of his mother's tribe! It was Gray Wolf's voice seeking for him in the night—Gray Wolf's blood inviting him to the Brotherhood of the Pack.

mother's tribe! It was Gray Wolf's voice seeking for him in the night—Gray Wolf's blood inviting him to the Brotherhood of the Pack.

Baree trembled as he listened. In his throat he whined softly. He edged to the sheer face of the rock. He wanted to go; nature was urging him to go. But the call of the wild was struggling against odds; for in him was the dog, with its generations of subdued and sleeping instincts—and all that night the dog in him kept Baree to the top of his rock.

NEXT morning Baree found many crawfish along the creek, and he feasted on their succulent flesh until he felt that he would never be hungry again. Nothing had tasted quite so good since he had eaten the partridge of which he had robbed Sekoosew the ermine.

In the middle of the afternoon Baree came into a part of the forest that was very quiet and very peaceful. The creek had deepened. In places its banks swept out until they formed small ponds. Twice he made considerable detours to get around these ponds. He traveled very quietly, listening and watching. Not since the ill-fated day he had left the old windfall had he felt quite so much at home as now. It seemed to him that at last he was treading country which he knew, and where he would find friends. Perhaps this was another miracle-mystery of instinct—of nature. For he was in old Beaver-tooth's domain. It was here that his father and mother had


hunted in the days before he was born. It was not far from here that Kazan and Beaver-tooth had fought that mighty duel under water, from which Kazan had escaped with his life without another breath to lose.

Baree would never know these things. He would never know that he was traveling over old trails. But something deep in him gripped at him strangely. He sniffed the air, as if in it he found the scent of familiar things. It was only a faint breath—an indefinable promise that brought him to the point of a mysterious anticipation.

The forest grew deeper. It was wonderful. There was no undergrowth, and traveling under the trees was like being in a vast, mystery-filled cavern through the roof of which the light of day broke softly, brightened here and there by golden splashes of the sun. For a mile Baree made his way quietly through this forest. He saw nothing but a few winged flittings of birds; there was almost no sound. Then he came to a still larger pond.

Around this pond there was a thick growth of alders and willows; the larger trees had thinned out. He saw the glimmer of afternoon sunlight on the water—and then, all at once, he heard life.

There had been few changes in Beaver-tooth's colony since the days of his feud with Kazan and the otters. Old Beaver-tooth was still older. He was fatter. He slept a great deal, and perhaps he was less cautious. He was



Baree could hear the crunching of flesh and bone as the bear devoured his dinner. It sounded good, and the fresh smell of fish filled him with a craving that had never been roused by crawfish or even partridge.

dozing on the great mud-and-brushwood dam of which he had been engineer-in-chief, when Baree came out softly on a high bank thirty or forty feet away. So noiseless had Baree been that none of the beavers had seen or heard him. He squatted himself flat on his belly, hidden behind a tuft of grass, and with eager interest watched every movement. Beaver-tooth was rousing himself. He stood on his short legs for a moment; then he tilted himself up on his broad, flat tail like a soldier at attention, and with a sudden whistle dived into the pond with a great splash.

In another moment it seemed to Baree that the pond was alive with beavers. Heads and bodies appeared and disappeared, rushing this way and that through the water in a manner that amazed and puzzled him. It was the colony's evening frolic. Tails hit the water like flat boards. Odd whistlings rose above the splashing—and then as suddenly as it had begun, the play came to an end. There were probably twenty beavers, not counting the young, and as if guided by a common signal,—something which Baree had not heard,—they became so quiet that hardly a sound could be heard in the pond. A few of them sank under the water and disappeared entirely, but most of them Baree could watch as they drew themselves out on shore.

The beavers lost no time in getting at their labor, and Baree watched and listened without so much as rustling a blade of the grass in which he was concealed. He was trying to understand. He was striving to place these curious and comfortable-looking creatures in his knowledge of things. They did not alarm him; he felt no uneasiness at their number or size. His stillness was not the quiet of discretion, but rather of a strange and growing desire to get better acquainted with this curious four-legged brotherhood of the pond. Already they had begun to make the big forest less lonely for him. And then, close under him—not more than ten feet from where he lay—he saw something that almost gave voice to the puppyish longing for companionship that was in him.

Down there, on a clean strip of the

shore that rose out of the soft mud of the pond, waddled fat little Umisk and three of his playmates. Umisk was just about Baree's age, perhaps a week or two younger. But he was fully as heavy, and almost as wide as he was long. Nature can produce no four-footed creature that is more lovable than a baby beaver, unless it is a baby bear; and Umisk would have taken first prize at any beaver baby-show in the world. His three companions were a bit smaller. They came waddling from behind a low willow, making queer little chuckling noises, their little flat tails dragging like tiny sledges behind them. They were fat and furry, and mighty friendly-looking to Baree, and his heart beat a sudden swift *pit-a-pat* of joy.

But Baree did not move. He scarcely breathed. And then, suddenly, Umisk turned on one of his playmates and bowled him over. Instantly the other two were on Umisk, and the four little beavers rolled over and over, kicking with their short feet and spitting with their tails, and all the time emitting soft little squeaking cries. Baree knew that it was not fight but frolic. He rose up on his feet. He forgot where he was—forgot everything in the world but those playing, furry balls. For the moment all the hard training nature had been giving him was lost. He was no longer a fighter, no longer a hunter, no longer a seeker after food. He was a puppy, and in him there rose a desire that was greater than hunger. He wanted to go down there with Umisk and his little chums and roll and play. He wanted to tell them, if such a thing were possible, that he had lost his mother and his home, and that he had been having a mighty hard time of it, and that he would like to stay with them and their mothers and fathers if they didn't care.

In his throat there came the least bit of a whine. It was so low that Umisk and his playmates did not hear it. They were tremendously busy.

Softly Baree took his first step toward them. And then another—and at last he stood on the narrow strip of shore within half a dozen feet of them. His sharp little ears were pitched forward, and he was wiggling his tail as



Baree stood still. Nepeese was not more than twenty feet from him. She sat on a rock, full in the early morning sun. pered "*Uchi moosis!*"—"The dog-pup!" It was the wild-dog she had shot—and thought



sun.
ight

She recognized him. She saw the white star on his breast and the white tip on his ear, and under her breath she whispered: "He had died!" There was no mistake. He was all dog now as he stood there looking at her.

fast as he could, and every muscle in his body was trembling in anticipation.

It was then that Umisk saw him, and his fat little body became suddenly as motionless as a stone.

"Hello!" said Baree, wiggling his whole body and talking as plainly as a human tongue could talk. "Do you care if I play with you?"

Umisk made no response. His three playmates now had their eyes on Baree. They didn't make a move. They looked stunned. Four pairs of staring, wondering eyes were fixed on the stranger.

Baree made another effort. He groveled on his fore-legs, while his tail and hind-legs continued to wiggle, and with a sniff he grabbed a bit of stick between his teeth.

"Come on—let me in," he urged. "I know how to play!"

He tossed the stick in the air as if to prove what he was saying, and gave a little yap.

Umisk and his brothers were like dummies.

And then, of a sudden, some one saw Baree. It was a big beaver swimming down the pond with a sapling timber for the new dam that was under way. Instantly he loosed his hold and faced the shore. And then, like the report of a rifle, there came the crack of his big flat tail on the water—the beaver's signal of danger that on a quiet night can be heard half a mile away.

"*Danger,*" it warned. "*Danger—danger—danger!*"

Scarcely had the signal gone forth when tails were cracking in all directions—in the pond, in the hidden canals, in the thick willows and alders. To Umisk and his companions they said:

"*Run for your lives!*"

Baree stood rigid and motionless now. In amazement he watched the four little beavers plunge into the pond and disappear. He heard the sounds of other and heavier bodies striking the water. And then there followed a strange and disquieting silence. Softly Baree whined, and his whine was almost a sobbing cry. Why had Umisk and his little mates run away from him? What had he done that they didn't want to make friends

with him? A great loneliness swept over him—a loneliness greater even than that of his first night away from his mother. The last of the sun faded out of the sky as he stood there. Darker shadows crept over the pond. He looked into the forest, where night was gathering—and with another whining cry he slunk back into it. He had not found friendship. He had not found comradeship. And his heart was very sad.

CHAPTER VII

FOR two or three days Baree's excursions after food took him farther and farther away from the pond. But each afternoon he returned to it—until the third day, when he discovered a new creek, and Wakayoo. The creek was fully two miles back in the forest. This was a different sort of stream. It sang merrily over a gravelly bed and between chasm walls of split rock. It formed deep pools and foaming eddies, and where Baree first struck it, the air trembled with the distant thunder of a waterfall. It was much pleasanter than the dark and silent beaver-stream. It seemed possessed of life, and the rush and tumult of it—the song and thunder of the water—gave to Baree entirely new sensations. He made his way along it slowly and cautiously, and it was because of this slowness and caution that he came suddenly and unobserved upon Wakayoo, the big black bear, hard at work fishing.

Wakayoo stood knee-deep in a pool that had formed behind a sandbar, and he was having tremendously good luck. Even as Baree shrank back, his eyes popping at sight of this monster he had seen but once before, in the gloom of night, one of Wakayoo's big paws sent a great splash of water high in the air, and a fish landed on the pebbly shore. A little while before, the suckers had run up the creek in thousands to spawn, and the rapid lowering of the water had caught many of them in these prison-pools. Wakayoo's fat, sleek body was evidence of the prosperity this circumstance had brought him. Although it was a little past the "prime" season for bearskins,

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A new series of short stories, entirely different from anything Mr. Butler—or any other author, for that matter—has ever written.



The Mystery Man

By Ellis Parker Butler

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN

IN the entire annals of detective science, from the beginning of the world until now, there probably never has been another detective like Shagbark Jones, the Mystery Man. He never used a disguise; he never shadowed or trailed a criminal; he never so much as looked like a detective. But in spite of this, he won a reputation that extended up and down the Mississippi Valley from St. Louis to St. Paul. Many who read this will recognize the portrait of the quaint old river-tramp, philosopher and medicine-faker, and agree with me that he combined—or combines, for he is still at work—the most remarkable qualities of simplicity and shrewdness, intelligence and ignorance.

He is known as Shagbark Jones, and you will find the name painted on the sides of his big shanty-boat *Euripides*,—Shagbark pronounced it "*You're a Pie Dees*,"—which to-day is floating somewhere on the Mississippi:

SHAGBARK JONES

THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEALER

Shagbark Life Oil!

Shagbark Liniment for Man and Beast!!

Teeth Pulled Without Pain.

THE MAN OF MYSTERY

Astrologist—Phrenologist.

7th Son of a 7th Son.

Direct Descendant of Pharaoh.

Grand Musical Entertainment and

Anatomical Lecture, 3 and 7 P. M.

On the dingy white of the shanty-boat this is painted in red and blue, and wherever a few feet of plain surface remains, are daubed such legends as "Shagbark Life Oil, \$1.00" and "Shagbark Liniment, 25 Cents."

THREE miles above the village of White Clay the boat came to rest in a willow-sheltered cove, and Black Pete, the glossy brown negro crew, made her fast to a clump of willows, clambered aboard again, pushed the narrow landing-plank ashore and put his head in at the door of the cabin.

"Miss Allie, we done landed," he said.

Shagbark's daughter was putting

small, paper-wrapped cakes of Infallible Grease-Remover into a worn valise.

"All right, Pete," she answered, and the big negro flopped himself down on the forward deck, turned on his stomach in the strip of shade close to the cabin and instantly began to snore.

In the cabin Shagbark Jones lay flat on his back on a threadbare, caved-in sofa, smoking a corn-cob pipe. His feet were bare and browned, and he wore trousers and a blue cotton shirt. The shirt was open at the throat, but this could not be seen, because of his brown beard. His head hair was brown and coarse, matted and tangled, and fell into his eyes across his bristly eyebrows. His bare arms, ankles and the backs of his hands were hairy. He was the hairiest man in the Mississippi Valley, and the laziest and the shrewdest and one of the best-natured. He raised his head and brushed the ashes from his beard.

"I guess I won't be back afore dark, Dad," Allie said, snapping the clasp of her valise. "Maybe I'll have to stay all night somewheres. If I don't get back to-morrow, you have Orlando cut up some more Infallible and wrap it. There aint nothing else you want to say afore I go?"

The girl, perhaps eighteen years old, was so small and slender she seemed younger. She wore a faded cotton gown, white "sneakers" that were now clay-stained to a brown, a cheap straw hat and coarse cotton stockings. More than once she had attracted the attention of some Society for Something or Other that believed Shagbark—cruel parent—sent her forth to sell the Infallible Grease-Remover and beat her when she returned with insufficient sales. Allie rather encouraged the notion. People instinctively pitied her when they found her standing at their doors with her turned-up nose, her big, appealing eyes, her blotchy freckles, her tan and her ragged dress. When she smiled they liked her. No one could help liking her when she smiled, and her father and Orlando and Black Pete adored her.

ALREADY Shagbark knew of the murder at White Clay. News of tragedies travels by water as rapidly as

by land. It passes from mouth to mouth, and Shagbark, no matter where he might hide the *Euripides*, inevitably heard those things that might interest him. From one source and another—from a passing towboat and from the farmer at whose riverside farm the shanty-boat had stopped for milk—he had learned most of the details. As the boat floated down the river, Shagbark, flat on his back on the caved-in sofa, had mulled the matter in his mind. Allie was going out now to look over the ground. She was his legs and his eyes; he was the solving brain.

"No, I guess I've said all I've got to say," Shagbark told her. "Find out all you can and get me a mind-picture of things and folks, Allie. Take good keer of yourself."

He dropped his head back on the sofa again and crossed his bare feet comfortably. The girl stepped over Black Pete, ran down the plank, pushed aside the willows and disappeared. The Infallible Grease-Remover she carried in her satchel was but a blind. It was nothing but common brown soap cut into cubes and wrapped in a printed slip that proclaimed its ability to remove grease-spots from the coarsest wool or the finest silk. The price of this was one dime; from a five-cent cake of soap Orlando could cut forty of the pieces, and the wrappers cost forty cents a thousand. As Orlando's time was worth just about nothing per week, the profit on the Infallible was excellent, but Allie cared little whether she sold any or not. She used the Infallible as a means of opening doors and beginning conversations.

When Allie was younger, the three lazy adults had already settled into a regular life of medicine-faking. "Shagbark's boat" was already known up and down the River. When it reached a landing, the musical entertainment was given. Orlando, the cook, became the "world-famous guitarist, Orlando J. Beethoven, nephew of the music-writer of that name;" and Black Pete, the crew, played his banjo and caroled a few songs. Shagbark lectured on anatomy—of which he knew nothing—and sold Shagbark Oil and Shagbark Liniment. These two remedies were guaranteed to cure every ill of the flesh; what one could

not cure the other did. In these affairs Allie sang a song or two in her thin, childish voice.

When she was ten, Shagbark had gained possession of a set of soiled, creased and ragged phrenological and astrological charts and added to his rôle of medicine-faker that of seer and fortune-teller. The shrewd child saw greater possibilities. She invented the Infallible and went ahead of the boat, selling it and worming information out of those who were most likely to patronize Shagbark. For a while she did this investigating on the quiet. She slipped out of the boat at night and returned under the cover of dark, bringing Shagbark news of old ladies' pains and aches, bits of past life-history and odd-fact remnants he could work into his "Life-readings, \$1.00 each."

IT was thus that Shagbark had built his first reputation as a mysterious man. He diagnosed cases at a glance. "Don't tell me what ails you; I'll tell you," he would say, and then he would tell Mrs. Murphy what her ache was, where it was located, how much she had slept during the past month and so on, until she sat with mouth agape. Or he would tell Mrs. Huggins of things that had happened in the past and add detail to detail until her eyes bulged. With his soiled charts and a hashed-up rigmarole and a red-cotton dressing-gown on which moons, stars and comets were painted, he astounded and fooled those who had come to him wishing to be fooled and astounded. It brought in good money.

Shagbark loved it. His eyes twinkled behind their curtains of hair.

Soon Alice discovered that it made little difference whether she was known to be connected with the Mystery Man or not. If Mrs. Murphy remembered that she had told Alice yesterday of the symptoms Shagbark revealed to-day and knew Alice was Shagbark's helper, it did not affect Mrs. Murphy's faith in the mystery. She wanted to be humbugged.

The arrival of the *Euripides* was always an event. Crowds flocked to hear the Musical Entertainment and the Lecture on Anatomy. Shagbark Oil

and Shagbark Liniment sold by the gross.

"Well, friends and feller-sufferers of humanity," Shagbark would declaim from his platform, "the subject of my lecture is on anatomy. If it wasn't for anatomy, we wouldn't ever be sick, for anatomy is the map of the human body, and science tells us it is divided into seven parts, the head, the lungs and ribs, the innards, two arms and two legs, and we've all got them. We will first consider the head and all what is therein—"

One day, when Alice had been working a town with Infallible Grease-Remover and her more infallible memory, she had stumbled over a real mystery. Detectives had worked on it and had failed. A year had passed since the crime had been committed, and Time himself had not solved the mystery. Alice told Shagbark of it when she returned to the boat. That night Shagbark did not sleep. He lay on the caved-in sofa, combing his beard with his fingers, staring at the smoked roof of the boat and going over the puzzle again and again, arranging and rearranging the pieces. For the first time in his life he had found something that interested him. Before morning he knew which of the men under suspicion were the real criminals.

When next he learned of a crime-mystery, he went up into the town himself. He could do nothing. The things he saw and the things he heard became a clotted, indigestible mass in his brain. He was muddled and fuddled; his mind went blind and sick with its load of facts and clues, and refused to work. He moped for three days, and then sent Alice into the town. She returned and told him nothing new, but told him the things he already knew and had himself seen. In an hour he announced the solution. It was correct. For success Shagbark required Alice's eyes and memory and tongue. She was the fact-gatherer, he the more than clever brain. Each required the other.

HALF an hour after Alice left the houseboat, a shocking odor began making itself apparent in the boat. Orlando, in the small kitchen at the rear of the boat, was cooking up a new

mess of Shagbark Oil, the work in which he took the greatest pride. Shagbark required the Oil to be strong in every detail. He argued that those who bought Shagbark Oil wanted to know it was medicine—real medicine. They could get ordinarily obnoxious drugs at a store,—castor oil, quinine, ipecac and so on,—but when they took Shagbark Oil, they wanted to know they were taking something. Shagbark sniffed the air and raised his head.

"How's she taste, Orlando?" he drawled. "She smells dod-gallux fine, don't she?"

"She tastes like Samuel J. Hades, that's how she tastes," piped the thin voice of Orlando from the kitchen exultantly. "She never tasted so Eturnu-el J. Rotten since I been makin' her. She's a dandy this time, Shagbark, a Dan-u-el J. Dandy! She tastes meaner than anything I ever tasted in all my Born-u-el J. Days."

"Dod-gallux if she don't smell so," said Shagbark. "You got to get her grippy this time, Orlando. She aint been grippy lately. She aint been right down grippy!"

"She's grippy!" crowed Orlando. "She's a regular Sting-u-el J. Gripper."

"She" was in an iron kettle on the small stove, bubbling and boiling. Even Pete on the foredeck, sound asleep, catching a whiff, gasped and buried his flat nose in the crook of his arm.

"Lemme see you test her," ordered Shagbark.

Orlando, coming to the cabin-door, bore a full spoon in his hand, blowing its contents to cool it. He was a thin, dried little man, his hair like wisps of tow, and his face wrinkled and small like that of a world-weary monkey. Like Shagbark's, his horny feet were bare, and he too wore a pair of nondescript trousers; but although the temperature of the kitchen—it was July—must have been 130, he also wore a suit of the thickest, stiffest red flannel underwear. He had an abiding faith in red wool. He wore it winter and summer for his rheumatism.

"Now look how she tastes," he piped eagerly. "Aint my face calm? Aint she as calm and quiet as a slab?"

"She couldn't be no calmer, Orlando," agreed Shagbark.

"And I'm tryin' to keep her calm," said Orlando. "I'm usin' all my Eturnu-el J. Will-power to keep her calm and peaceful. And now look at her!"

He emptied the spoon into his mouth. Instantly his face was convulsed. He gagged, put his hand to his mouth, turned as red as fire, choked and sputtered. Tears flowed from his eyes. A look of intense disgust and nausea turned his mouth yellow.

"And—and I'm tryin' to keep her calm!" he gasped. "I'm bustin' myself to keep her calm!"

He was trying, but it was impossible. His face screwed into a million wrinkles. He clapped his free hand over his mouth again and made a dash for the rear deck. He scooped up a pail of the tepid river water and rinsed his mouth, breathing in and out hastily. He took a drink and returned, his face beaming.

"Aint she a gripper?" he crowed triumphantly. "Didn't she claw my face up, Shagbark? Aint she a Jim-u-el J. Gripper this time?"

"I guess maybe we've got to make her do," said Shagbark.

"She shook me like a cat shakes a rat, didn't she?" said Orlando proudly. "She grips, don't she?"

"She grips, Orlando," acknowledged Shagbark. "Bottle her up and label her. We'll try to make her do."

On the stove a second and smaller kettle containing the Liniment bubbled, but this was a more simple matter. The Liniment was in reality a salve, put up in small tin boxes, and as it was for outward application only, it needed but to look mean and raise more or less of a blister. Its composition was simple: cooking lard melted until liquid, five drops of carbolic acid to give a "healthy" odor, one pound of raw ground mustard and enough common bluing to turn the mess a sickly green.

IT was late that night when Alice returned to the *Euripides*. She threw her valise into a corner and dropped into a chair.

"Orlando, get me something to eat; I'm hungry. Pete, get a pan of cool

water and wash my feet; they're all bruised up. Listen, Dad! it's a big mystery they've got at White Clay, and some folks there are praying you'll be along soon. Set up and listen!"

Shagbark raised himself to a sitting position on the sofa; and then, while the giant negro knelt and bathed the girl's feet with all the tenderness of a woman, Orlando set food on the table. As Alice ate, she talked.

"Here's a photo' of the feller they

"No papers or nothing on the dead man?" asked Shagbark.

"Nothing like that," said Allie.

"Well, I went to town and looked around and sold two or three cakes of Infallible, and then I went to this Jim Dunham's house and got his mother to talking. I said to her: 'Shucks! your boy wouldn't kill nobody! You wait until Shagbark comes along, and he'll prove it, I bet.' So she broke loose talking and crying. I pumped her dry."



Orlando emptied the spoon into his mouth. Instantly his face was convulsed. He gagged, put his hand to his mouth, turned as red as fire, choked and sputtered. Tears flowed from his eyes. "And—and I'm tryin' to keep her calm!" he gasped. "I'm bustin' myself to keep her calm!"

arrested, Dad; and I'll bet your boots he never killed a man. I stole it off his ma's mantel. "She is a nice woman but the tired kind. She's sort of loony just now over him being taken away. Her husband drinks."

Shagbark studied the photograph.

"Do they know who the dead man is yet?" he asked.

"No, they don't. He's a mystery—nobody ever saw him before. They found him dead in a deserted pottery-kiln, a hole shot in his chest with a shotgun. The shotgun belonged to Jim Dunham, the feller I gave you the photo' of."

"Everybody thinks Jim Dunham killed the feller?" asked Shagbark.

"Seems so. His dad does—or lets on he does. His name is Mike. Now let me tell it my own way. You know what White Clay is like—a scraggly place under the big bluff, with thirty or forty houses and two stores and a saloon. All the houses are on the side of the road toward the bluff, and on the other side, between the river and the road, are the pottery kilns."

Quickly and concisely she gave a word-sketch of the village. The houses were in need of paint; some of the kilns were

being "fired;" some were "cold;" and others were deserted and "dead." For the rest the town consisted of broken jugs and crocks, a small railway-station, one short "spur" known locally as the "switch," pile after pile of cordwood, and the rough sheds in which the potters shaped and dried their product. There was no school, the nearest being on the bluff, up which a wood-road ran. Everybody looked tired and disheartened. They said the pottery business was no good; a man couldn't live decent at it.

She described the deserted kiln in which the dead man had been found. It was like a brick beehive daubed with clay, with an opening so low a man would have to stoop down to enter it. On the floor were shards of pottery and the ashes and charred remnants of the last fire. Under these the body of the dead man had been hidden.

"Who found him?" asked Shagbark.

"A man by name of Mike Mullarky," said Alice. "It was his kiln. He happened to go into it and found the dead man."

SHE continued her story. Mike Dunham, the father of Jim, was himself the owner of a kiln, turning the pots and crocks and jugs, and burning them with the assistance of the young fellow, his son. Dunham had never "got on" and never would. He was one of the rum-sodden sort of drinkers; he was always hard up; the night of the murder he had been in the saloon most of the time and did not come home until late.

The Dunhams lived in a small house at the down-river end of the village, and below it was nothing but weedy flats, except the deserted Mullarky kiln on the opposite side of the road, a quarter of a mile down-river. Half a mile or so below this, the river formed a pond, weedy and grass-grown, with an inlet a hundred feet wide.

She had not seen Jim Dunham, because he had already been taken to the county seat under arrest. The case against him, while circumstantial, appeared complete. At first he had only reiterated that he had killed no one and that he did not know who had killed the

stranger; later he had refused to talk at all.

At night, Alice said, the big, stodgy buffalo-fish—carplike creatures—often swam into the pond below the village to feed on the grass and weeds, and on the Friday evening when the murder was done, Jim Dunham had taken his shotgun from its rack in the kitchen, saying he was going down to the pond to shoot buffalo-fish. It was a sport sometimes favored by the men and boys of White Clay. This was before dusk. He returned to the house between ten and eleven, his face and hands scratched and bleeding and his rough clothes torn. He was pale and somewhat weak and did not have his gun.

Mrs. Dunham was still up, waiting for her husband, and Jim told her a story no one believed. He said he had gone down to the pond and found the fish had not run in yet; so he had thrown himself on the grass by the road and waited, and waiting, had fallen asleep. He did not know how long he had slept but he had awakened suddenly and found his gun was gone. He had thought some one had picked it up, either in malicious theft or as a joke, and had thought he might overtake the fellow. He had started toward the village on a run. It had been dark, and forgetting that Mullarky had recently strung a barbed-wire around his pottery-field, he had run full into the wire, scratching himself, tearing his clothes; and the wire, rebounding, had thrown him backward so that his head had struck a broken jug. He showed his mother the raw wound in his hair. He said the blow had rendered him unconscious. After he had come to he had returned home.

"While he was telling his ma all this," Alice said, "Mrs. Mullarky came over from her house next door.

"She had a face-ache and tooth-ache and had run over to see if Mrs. Dunham had any remedy at hand, because Mike Mullarky was in bed and drunk and wouldn't go down to the saloon for a swig or two of whisky—her favorite remedy in such cases. She heard Jim's story—Mrs. Dunham made him tell it again, and she helped wash his wound and bandage his head. Then she got

the nostrum she wanted and went home. Before noon next day everyone in White Clay knew Jim Dunham had lost his gun and joked him about it. That night Mike Mullarky found the body in the deserted kiln, and with it Jim Dunham's gun.

The dead man was an absolute stranger in White Clay, but Jim had often made short visits in Tenersville, the big town up the river, and it was believed he had a girl there. The county sheriff was looking this up and believed jealous rivalry was the motive of the crime.

WHEN Alice had finished her recital, Shagbark sat looking at the bowl of his pipe, turning it slowly in his hand.

"I got to find out three things, Allie," he said. "I got to find out who took this Jim Dunham's gun, and who was the man that was shot, and who shot him. What time was it they found the body?"

"It was eleven o'clock at night—Saturday night. Mike Mullarky found it."

Shagbark closed his eyes. He rubbed his hand over his face like a man who is wiping away cobwebs. Then he asked:

"What time did this boy's dad come home Friday night? Was he drunk?"

"Mighty drunk, his wife says. It was nigh to ten o'clock."

"Nigh to ten o'clock. And that was mighty late," mused Shagbark. "That was mighty late for White Clay. I reckon the saloon had closed. It is almost ten o'clock now, Allie; was the saloon closed when you came by?"

"Closed tight," she answered. "You know how towns like White Clay are, Dad. Everybody but the loafers get to bed at eight or nine."

"Yes, yes!" said Shagbark, rubbing his hand over his face again. "So now we know who killed the man, Allie. We know that now."

"Do we, Dad?" she asked eagerly.

"Why, dod-whillux it! don't I say we do?" he cried. "Of course we know! We aint blind, are we? And we know he was killed with Jim Dunham's gun. And Jim Dunham was down below town when his gun was took. He was down below the kiln. So I reckon the stranger was coming from that direction. The

man that killed him was expecting him to come along and went down there to get a first look at him, and he saw Jim Dunham's gun and just took it along for luck—it might come handy. Now, why did he tell his wife?"

"Who tell whose wife?" asked Allie.

"Why did the murderer tell his wife? Why did he tell her he had shot a man with Jim Dunham's gun?"

"Did he tell her that?" asked Allie.

"If he didn't tell her," asked Shagbark, "why did she go over to Mrs. Dunham's when she saw Jim Dunham come home?"

"You mean that Mike Mullarky killed the man?" asked Allie.

"Now, Allie!" complained Shagbark.

"I can't make out why a daughter of mine is so stupid. I got to talk to you like I was reading out of a primer. What was Mike Mullarky doin' in a deserted kiln at eleven at night when he found a dead man there? You've got a town that is all abed by ten o'clock, even the saloon closed, and a deserted kiln that nobody would want to go into anyhow; and a man whose wife went next door to find out if Jim Dunham knew who took his gun goes into that kiln and finds a dead man! He goes there at an hour of night when nobody ever goes anywhere, let alone into a deserted kiln. Now, who did he kill and what did he kill him for?"

He raised his eyes to the cheap alarm-clock that ticked on a bare pine shelf.

"Allie," he said, "do you reckon folks at White Clay connected you up pretty well with me? Do you reckon they thought you was from the *You're a pie, Dees* and was snoopin' round for the Mystery Man?"

"I know they did," the girl answered.

"Well, we got time yet," said Shagbark. "It aint eleven yet, and they wont dare go to the kiln before midnight for fear somebody might happen to be up, sick or something. But go they will. Soon as they knew Shagbark was comin', they started to get uneasy. They tried to remember if everything was safe in the kiln. They're gettin' more anxious and worried about it every minute, and along about midnight they wont be able to stand it any longer. So you got to go

to the kiln, Allie. Orlando can go with you if you want him."

"I don't, Dad," the girl answered, beginning to draw on her stockings. "What'll they do and what shall I do?"

"Which way does the door of the kiln face?" asked Shagbark.

"Toward the town."

"Then they wont strike a light, lest somebody in town sees it," said Shagbark. "You'll hide in the dark in the kiln, Allie. Pretty soon they'll come along and come into the kiln. They'll go over things. If they run onto you, just groan—groan like a sick man. They wont stay there. They'll scoot!"

The girl hurried her preparations.

"To-morrow morning," said Shagbark, "you'll go back and say that Shagbark Jones, the Mystery Man, is coming to town and he wants the dead man dug up. You'll say he's goin' to ask the dead man who killed him, and that the dead man will answer back and tell the truth."

THE girl slipped out into the dark.

Shagbark stretched himself out on the caved-in sofa and slept. Orlando and Black Pete sought their bunks and slept.

Through the deserted kilns and the kilns not deserted, Alice dodged her way. She was not in the least afraid. She stooped at the entrance of Mullarky's kiln, went inside and crouched low in the dark far from the entrance. Suddenly the thought came to her that within touch of her hand, almost, the dead man had reposed, and her flesh arose in goose-pimples; her hair crept at the roots; she began to tremble.

She did not tremble long.

She heard a noise, the sound of feet cautiously treading the shards outside, and a black form darkened the kiln entrance—a man; she knew it was a man by the black bars his legs made against the dim light. She saw him stoop and enter, and immediately the entrance was darkened again. She heard the soft whisper of a hand feeling along the bricks of the inside of the kiln. The sound came from over the man's head—he was evidently feeling among the bricks high up.

"Is it there, Mike?" she heard a woman whisper.

"Yes."

"It's safe and all?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then, and let it be."

The woman went out of the kiln and the man followed her. Alice waited until their steps had died in the distance. She heaped a few bricks on the floor and stood on them, feeling where the man had felt. Some of the bricks were loose, and she moved them until her hand touched something soft and flat—a leather wallet. She went back to her corner and struck a match; the wallet was filled with money. She did not count it, but it seemed to be several hundred dollars. In the other side of the wallet she found a folded paper, a letter. Lighting one match after another, she read:

To whoever you are—I found yure stuff in my kill and Ive took it away and hid it. if you want it back you can fetch me four hunderd dollars Friday nite to the kill or Ile turn it over to the constabal. Its wurth a lot moar than four hunderd.

MIKE MULLARKY.

The girl slipped the letter back into the wallet. For a moment she hesitated; then she placed the wallet under the charred wood in the center of the floor and glided out of the kiln. Except for a barking dog or two, the village was as if dead. When she reached the boat, her father was sleeping so heavily he did not awaken, and she stole into the little cabin set aside for her and threw herself on the bed. She slept instantly.

THE moment, the next morning, that

Alice left the boat, Black Pete pushed it out into the stream. The girl walked to White Clay and through the village until she came to the Dunham house. Mrs. Dunham welcomed her.

"I seen Shagbark last night," Alice said. "He's coming down-river to-day and he says he'll stop here. I told him about your Jim and all. He seemed sort of curious about it."

"Did he think Jim done it?" queried the woman tensely.

"He wont say," Alice answered. "He



Black Pete slid the landing-plank ashore, and Shagbark walked down it in state.

says: 'Why don't the passel of fools find out, if they want to? Why don't they ask the dead man? What they come pesterin' me for? I don't know—the dead man knows.'"

"What did he mean?"

"He meant that if he wanted to find out, he'd have to ask the dead man, and he didn't see why you folks couldn't do it if you wanted to know so bad. I got him to say he'd do it."

"Do what?" asked Mrs. Dunham, trembling.

"Ask the dead man," said Alice. "I got him to say he'd do it, but some-

body has to dig the dead man up for him. You'd better get your husband and somebody to do it."

"I'll get him dug up!" cried Mrs. Dunham. "I'll get him dug up if I have to do it myself!" And she rushed from the house. In fifteen minutes all White Clay knew that the Mystery Man was coming and that he had promised to make the dead stranger speak. As soon as the *Euripides* came into sight, men, women and children crowded to the levee.

When the boat touched the levee, Mrs. Dunham was in the front rank,

her drink-sodden husband close behind her. Black Pete, as the boat grounded, leaped ashore and cast a rope around the post that represented the town wharfage.

"Where's Shagbark?" Mrs. Dunham asked, grasping the negro by the arm. Alice pushed to her side.

"He aint woke up yet," said Pete. "He sot up 'most all night readin' the horoscopes in the stars, and I reckon he wont open his eyes till 'long about noon when he gits hongry. He's gettin' his beauty sleep."

"Aw! go wake him up!" some one cried. "We got a murder here. Can't you see this woman's 'most crazy?"

"Orlando, reckon we durst wake him up?" asked Pete.

"He'll be the most Eturn-u-el J. Madman you ever see in your life if you do," squeaked Orlando. "I wouldn't wake Shagbark up for all the money in the Epluribus J. Unum—no, sir!"

"I will call him," said Alice.

She climbed onto the small foredeck and went inside. Black Pete and Orlando followed her.

"They jes' plumb crazy fo' you, boss," said Black Pete to Shagbark. "I never see a gang so up an' comin' as what they is. Wont nothin' do but you come out."

"They're primed, Dad," said Alice. "I'll tell 'em twenty bottles—shall I?"

"Yup! Get the oil, Orlando," drawled Shagbark.

Alice went outside. She stood on the edge of the deck.

"You know Shagbark don't care for this mystery business, folks," she said. "He hates it, it tires him out so. His business is sellin' Shagbark Oil. But he says he'll see what the dead man has to say if it don't interfere with business. If he can sell somewhere around twenty bottles of oil, dollar a bottle or six bottles for five dollars—"

Shagbark ambled out upon the deck, with Orlando following. Orlando carried the box of oil.

"Now, folks—" Shagbark began. He reached into the box and held up a bottle. "Now, folks, this here Shagbark Oil—"

Forty hands reached for the bottle.

As rapidly as Orlando could hand them to him, Shagbark exchanged the bottles of the vile concoction for silver dollars. In five minutes the box was empty.

"Seems like you fellers ought to 'tend to your own troubles and let me get my sleep out," he drawled. "You're too plumb lazy; that's what ails you. Where is this dead man you're makin' such a fuss about?"

"Come on; we'll show you!" they cried.

SHAGBARK waved his hand at Orlando, and the cook went inside. He returned with an astrological chart (for effect) and the dirty red-cotton gown covered with stars and moons. Black Pete slipped this over Shagbark's head and drew it down. He slid the landing-plank ashore, and Shagbark walked down it in state. Mrs. Dunham crowded close beside him and led the way. It led through the village and up the wood-road to the top of the bluff. The Mystery Man mumbled to himself. Now and then he stopped and listened and then went on again. As the crowd turned from the levee into the village, he passed a pile of common red bricks, and he stopped and lifted four from the pile and gave them to Orlando. When they reached the Mullarky house, Shagbark stopped suddenly.

"Hey?" he queried, and he took one of the bricks from Orlando and held it to his ear, listening. He placed the brick carefully upright before the gate of the Mullarky place and went on. Twice more he harkened to the bricks and placed one before the deserted kiln and one on the spot where Jim Dunham had slept beside the pond. Each time Mrs. Mullarky, following behind, crossed herself and cast a horrified glance at her husband. The fourth brick Orlando carried until they reached the side of the opened grave.

Shagbark looked down into the grave. He gave an involuntary start of surprise. The lid of the coffin had been removed, and the face he saw there was known to him, for one river-rat knows another, and more than once Shagbark had met this man. The Mystery Man seated himself crosslegged on the edge of the

grave. He held out his hand for the fourth brick and set it on end at the edge of the grave. In an easy, conversational tone he addressed the dead man.

"Good mornin', Henry," he said. "Sorry to bother you when you wasn't expectin' to be disturbed, but these folks aint got gumption to ask you what they want to know. Did Jim Dunham kill you, Henry?"

THERE was not a sound. The hairy impostor listened, and the crowd held its breath.

"He says he don't know no Jim Dunham," drawled Shagbark. "He says Jim Dunham never done nothin' to him. Henry, what fetched you to White Clay, anyhow?"

The same silence.

"He says," drawled Shagbark, "he'd been doin' some house-robbin' up to Tenersville and hid the stuff in a dead kiln whilst waitin' for the thing to quiet down. He says he hid it there and some feller come and took it away and left a note tellin' him to fetch some money or he couldn't have the stuff back, so he come to fetch the money. He says that when he come, the feller was in the dark in the kiln and when he come inside, the feller shot him dead, so he could have the money and the stuff too. —What say, Henry? I didn't catch that."

He listened and spoke again.

"The kiln where I sot up the brick? That was the kiln, he says. That was where he was killed. I guess we know that, Henry; you was found dead there. Now, Henry, where is the money you was killed for?"

Mike Mullarky moved forward in the crowd. His wife clutched him by the arm, but he shook her off.

"He says," Shagbark drawled, "Henry says it is in a wallet under the charred wood on the floor of the kiln. Right under the burnt wood and all, Henry? That's a funny place—"

Mike Mullarky pushed forward.

"Say," he said, "what's the use listenin' to this nonsense? You all know it aint so. Twenty of us an' the sheriff himself scraped that floor with our finger-nails, almost, and there was nothin' there. I tell ye—"

"Shut up, Mike!" shouted some one.

"Mike, be still!" cried his wife. She was white with fear. She grasped her husband's arm and tried to draw him away. He pushed her aside, and his foot struck the upright brick. It fell. It went hurtling over and over and struck the coffin, giving out a hollow sound. Mrs. Mullarky shrieked and clapped her hands over her ears. She sank to the ground at the grave-edge.

"What say, Henry?" drawled Shagbark without emotion. "You think this here Mullarky is a mean cuss? Why, Henry?"

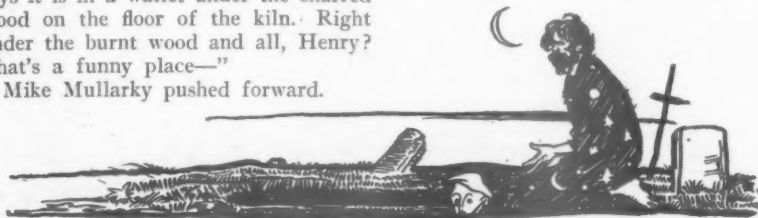
Mullarky pushed two men aside and turned to go.

"Henry says," drawled the Mystery Man, "that any feller is a mean cuss who would kill a man and then throw a brick at him."

The leap through the crowd that Mullarky made, only to be grasped by twenty hands, was proof enough that the Mystery Man had solved another mystery. Shagbark arose. He held his hand high for silence. Every eye was on him.

"This I say," he cried: "the guilty shall be found out! Remember that! Remember it, and, ladies and gents, remember that the Grand Musical Entertainment and Anatomical Lecture will take place on the levee each afternoon and evening, at three and seven P. M., until further notice."

The next moment the crowd was rushing pellmell down the wood-road to find the indisputable evidence of Mike Mullarky's guilt under the charred wood on the floor of the deserted kiln.





A Forgotten Order

A story of three railroad men and a maid.

By Charles Wesley Sanders

ELEANOR HEATH was a second-trick operator at Milvale, which is a country station on an east-and-west railroad. She went to work at three o'clock in the afternoon and quit at eleven at night. Brooks, the first-trick operator, went to work at seven in the morning and quit at three in the afternoon. The third-trick operator was a youngster who doesn't count here. He slept a good deal of his eight hours.

Eleanor was twenty-two. She had been an operator for five years. She was capable and earned sixty-five dollars a month. That was not too much, for her mother and a young brother and sister were dependent upon her. An older brother, married, had taught her

telegraphy. Eleanor was as good-looking an operator as ever guided a stylus across a book of carboned flimsy. She was a healthy, well-built girl whose gray eyes, fine skin and abundance of soft brown hair made less favored sisters envious. Since she was healthy, she was cheerful. She smiled at the inhabitants of the little world in which she dwelt. Most men liked her. Brooks loved her.

So did Truesdale, who ran a freight-engine over that subdivision of the road. Truesdale was thirty-two. He was a big, blue-eyed man, a very trustworthy engineer but an exceedingly poor conversationalist. Truesdale counted that day a golden one which found the block at Milvale against him. When Eleanor had orders for him, he had a chance to look

at her and to listen to her voice as she read the orders to him and to his conductor. Days when the block was white, he leaned from his cab-window to catch a glimpse of her. But he never got far beyond a formal salutation of her.

Turner—who was Truesdale's fireman—also loved Eleanor. He was a short but stocky man of twenty-six, with sandy hair and pale eyelashes; he did not chew tobacco like many firemen, and he had teeth of marvelous whiteness. In overalls and jumper he was not a bad-looking little man. He counted himself in the running.

Only one of the three was jealous. That was Truesdale the silent. He was jealous of Brooks, for Brooks was by way of being a dandy. He was a tall, slender young man, not much older than Eleanor herself. He made seventy dollars a month, and his board and room cost him five dollars a week. The cashier of the Milvale Exchange Bank treated him with civility.

Brooks was not jealous; nor was Turner. Brooks appeared to see only his own image. How could there be a rival to himself in any girl's favor? Turner scorned men like Brooks. No thinking woman would marry a doll. Turner was not jealous of Truesdale, because he never dreamed that Truesdale could feel sentimental emotion. He considered Truesdale an icicle.

Situations like that create talk. Men not concerned in the outcome could see that the trio were in love with Eleanor. In cabooses, in engine cabs, in round-houses and even along wind-swept sections, the "dope" on the result was considered, mostly in jest. And that "dope" finally came to be that Brooks would win and that either Truesdale or Turner would "knock his fine block off" for doing so. It was natural, they argued, that a nice girl like Eleanor would want to marry an office man. Brooks' hours were short. His job entailed no danger to his immaculate person. He was saving. He would be able to go home at the end of every trick. He would not be lying over, half the time, at some distant terminal while his wife was at home wondering about him. Yes, Brooks

most certainly would presently need the services of a minister—and a doctor.

ONE thing puzzled all three men: Eleanor seemed to treat them all alike. It never occurred to any of them that there might be a fourth aspirant whom they did not know. Eleanor smiled at Brooks' attempts at intimate talk, at Truesdale's silences and at Turner's fierceness. She did not seem to be aware of the tumult in the breasts of any of them.

Thus the first summer of her term at Milvale sped. Autumn sunned itself briefly and was smothered by an early winter. On a Monday afternoon Truesdale and Turner on their engine sped toward Milvale. Two miles from the village they had both looked at their watches: neither timepiece varied a second from 3:30 P. M. The same thought was in the minds of both men. Eleanor would have been on duty for half an hour. They would get a glimpse of her, even if she did not stop them for orders. Truesdale prepared to lean from the cab; Turner fixed his fire and edged over to the gangway.

The station at Milvale bulked itself out of a driving snow. Its shape became more clearly defined as the engine bore down upon it. Then a white light glimmered. The block lamp had been lighted because of the storm.

"She's white," Turner called up to Truesdale disconsolately.

"White she is," Truesdale agreed sadly.

A glimpse of the girl was all they could hope for that day. The engine came abreast of the station. Truesdale leaned from his window. Turner grasped the hand-hold and bent far forward. Their eyes swept the interior of the telegraph-office. No one was there. The recollection of a smiling face was not to be theirs through the trip.

Truesdale put his hand on the throttle and looked into the whirling snow. The keenness of his disappointment surprised even himself. Turner banged the firebox door open and sprinkled in a shovelful of coal. Then he climbed to his box and hunched himself down in a silence as deep as Truesdale's habitual one.

Truesdale drew his orders from his pocket after a while and looked through them again. He knew them by heart, but he was a careful man.

"We've got till four-twenty to make Arlington for First Forty-eight," he called across to Turner.

Turner nodded sulkily. He didn't care just now what orders they had. He wondered where the dickens Eleanor had been when their train passed the Milvale station.

The big engine, under Truesdale's sure guidance, sang her way over the rails and through the whirling snow. The two men settled to the routine of their jobs. Truesdale sat gazing straight ahead of him. Turner sat thus also, except when he descended to give his fire a shovelful of coal.

The long train rumbled past half a dozen stations. It came, at three-forty-five, to the last station this side of Arlington. The distance between this station and Arlington was not great. They had thirty minutes to cover it and five minutes to clear First Forty-eight. The time, Truesdale was well aware, was ample. The train passed the station and thundered along on this last part of the initial lap of its journey. The two men did not look at each other. Though their minds were filled with the same thoughts, they were as far apart from each other in that thinking as the poles.

THE engine reeled off three miles.

Truesdale peered out to begin to locate landmarks, so that he would know when he was nearing Arlington. He picked up a familiar farmhouse and looked ahead for a crossroads store beside the track. . . . And then Turner, on his box, suddenly cried out. Though Truesdale had never heard that cry before, he recognized it. It has echoed many times in engine cabs the world over. It is like a heritage of the rail, handed down from generation to generation. It was the cry of fear—from the lips of a man slow to become afraid.

Truesdale's head came round with a jerk. His keen eyes searched the track ahead of him. Out of the snow-cloud came a black shape. Truesdale sent the scream of his whistle into the gathering

gloom as a warning to the men in the cab of the engine rushing down upon them. Then he shut off and shoved his air-brake to emergency. There was no more to do. He leaped for one gangway, while Turner leaped for the other. They went off at opposite sides and rolled down the bank in the snow. Then the two engines struck and cars piled up behind them.

Truesdale and Turner picked themselves up, forgot their bruises and ran toward the engines. As they reached them, the fireman and the engineer of the second engine staggered toward them. They were not much hurt. The toll of the wreck was in smashed engines and damaged cars.

"How'd you get here?" asked Briggs of the second engine.

"Came on my orders," Truesdale answered with some asperity. "I had till four-twenty to make Arlington for you."

"You did on your first order," Briggs retorted. "How about the annulment of that and a new order that we were to wait till three-fifty for you at Antwerp?"

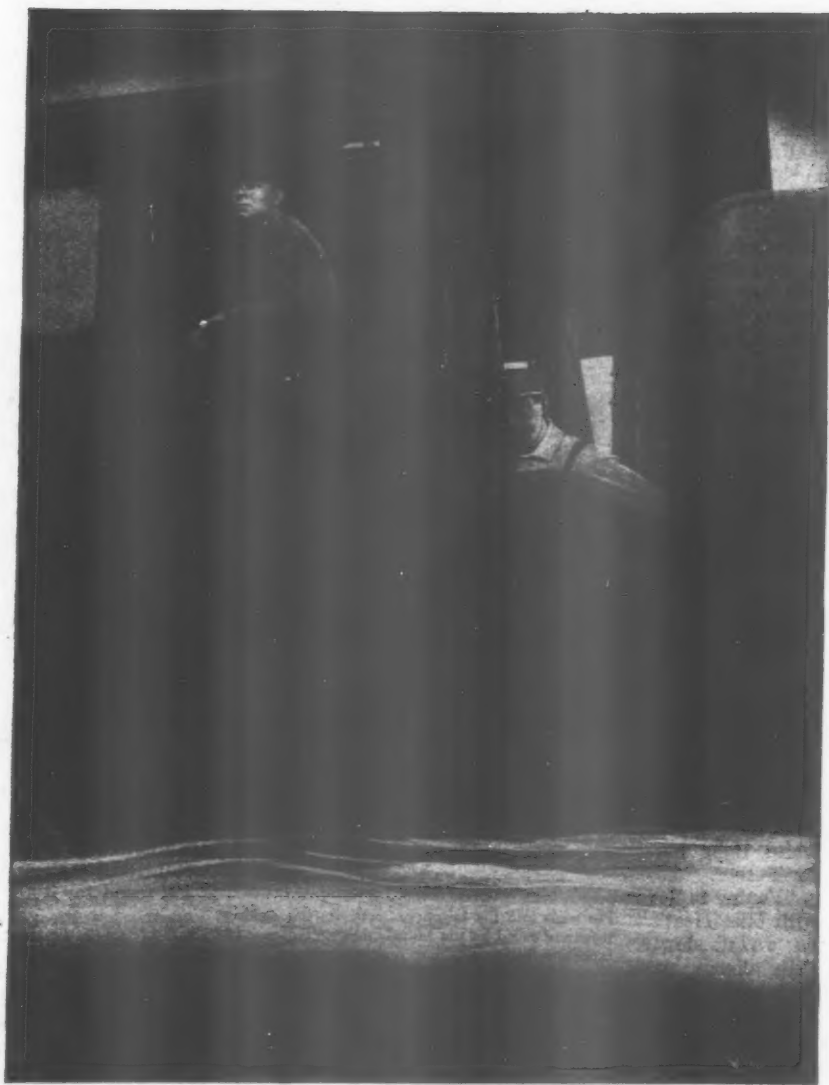
Truesdale's head went up. He heard Turner, at his elbow, gasp. Turner opened his lips to warn Truesdale, but the silent man had been as quick to understand the situation as his fireman had been.

Apparently the dispatcher had annulled the order which gave Truesdale's train time on First Forty-eight at Arlington and had superseded it with an order giving Truesdale time only at Antwerp. Briggs had got that order. Truesdale had not. Hence the wreck.

Truesdale saw that if the order had been issued to him at all, it had been issued at Milvale. It could not have been issued recently enough to have permitted its issuance at any station this side of Milvale. And Eleanor had been on duty when the second order was issued. When Truesdale's train had passed Milvale, Eleanor had not been in the station. Plainly Eleanor had taken the order from the dispatcher and then had forgotten it.

Truesdale smiled, and Turner held his breath.

"Doggoned if I didn't clean forget



Truesdale leaned from his window. Turner grasped the hand-hold and bent far forward. Their eyes swept the interior of the telegraph-office. No one was there.

that second order, Briggs," said Truesdale.

A SITUATION like that makes for a tragedy of the rail. A man's job is gone when he forgets. By his admission Truesdale lost the fruits of ten years' hard work with scoop and at

throttle. Into Briggs' old eyes leaped a look of sympathy and understanding.

"Sorry, Bill," he said. "We're all liable to do it. If I can help you any way, let me know."

"Thanks," said Truesdale, and he turned away.

The conductors of the two trains had

gone to the station to ask for a relief-train. Truesdale stood by his engine. Turner came up to him. They were alone. Truesdale fixed his eyes, grown cold and hard in the last few minutes, on the paler eyes of the fireman.

"The girl handed the order on to me because I 'phoned her from the yards," Truesdale said. "She handed the conductor's copy up to me too, because I told her he would be riding on the engine. That's against the rules all around, but I think they'll overlook it in this case, because Miss Heath is a woman, a faithful worker and capable, and because I told her to do it. Get me?"

Turner stared for ten seconds through his pale lashes. A job more or less didn't mean so much to him as the outcome of his love-affair. Standing here with his eyes like that, making a sacrifice for a woman, Truesdale was "some guy," Turner decided. And then a great white light burst for Turner.

"You're in love with Miss Heath," he said slowly. "No offense, pal! I c'n see what's before my eyes. . . . You've lost your job by this deal. What're you going to do?"

"I'm going to get word to Miss Heath by long-distance, go in on the relief-train, take my medicine and beat it."

"I get you," said Turner emphatically.

It was a great relief to Turner to have come into the presence of a peril and to have had that peril dissipated all within the space of a few minutes. If Truesdale had stayed to woo the girl, he would have been a real rival, the fireman knew. He was a good-looker, and he would be a hero in her eyes.

Truesdale was already hurrying toward the station down the track. When he got there, he went into the telephone-booth in the waiting-room and called for the Milvale telegraph-office. He had to wait five minutes in the stuffy inclosure before Eleanor's voice came to him over the wire.

"This is Truesdale," he said. "We hit Forty-eight here. There was an order out for us at Milvale, wasn't there?"

"Yes," the girl replied. "I—"

But the silent man had found his tongue in this emergency. He interrupted her impolitely and began to talk fast.

"Listen," said he. "Of course I didn't get that order, but I'm going to fix things. The order was handed up to me—both copies of it—because I 'phoned to you from the yard office. Get that? Wait a minute. You take time to think this over. There are your mother and the children, you know. I'll stand for it all right. I won't get in in time to see the Old Man tonight, but I'll see him first thing in

the morning. You just remember the one thing: You handed on the orders. Keep repeating that till you believe it yourself. I've heard it can be done. Good-by and good luck—Eleanor."

THE receiver clicked the circuit shut on the last word, so that the girl did not hear it. Truesdale had meant that she should not hear it. But he had to give himself the solace of the half-whisper, for it was the first time he had uttered the name—and it was to be the last.



He went into the telephone-booth in the waiting-room and called for the Milvale telegraph-office. Eleanor's voice came to him over the wire. "This is Truesdale," he said. "We hit Forty-eight here. There was an order out for us at Milvale, wasn't there?"

He had felt that he must give her no time to argue. He feared that on the spur of the moment she might refuse to be a party to his planned deception, but he was sure that when she thought matters over she would agree to it—and be grateful. She simply couldn't afford



The Old Man took his pipe from his mouth and laughed. "Truesdale," he said slowly, pointing the moist pipestem at the engineer, "you want to take lessons in speech. You've held your tongue so long that you don't know how to use it when you try."

to lose her job. There were, as he had said, her mother and the children.

He went home on the relief-train, arriving toward midnight, and he went at once to his boarding-house. He passed a restless night, not because he had lost a job but because he had lost *the* girl. He was not blind to the fact that she would feel herself his debtor, but he was not one to win a girl by that route. He didn't suppose she cared anything about him, anyway. There was the dandy, Brooks, a man more of her own kind.

As the gray winter dawn came creeping into his room, he rose and dressed in the uncertain light. A surge of loneliness swept through him. When silent men are lonely, they are likely to be bitterly so.

His breakfast was a formality. He hardly tasted it. He did not even light his cigar, but clamped his teeth on it and set out for the office of the Old Man.

As he went through the dispatchers' room, he found no difference of manner in the men seated there. They nodded to him as they had always done in the past. He wondered about that. He should have been a kind of pariah among them. There is no scorn in the railroad world like the scorn heaped on the head of him who forgets.

Truesdale opened the Old Man's door and stepped inside. The Old Man—he was probably fifty—was writing at a desk. He looked up and nodded.

"Hello, Truesdale," he said. "Got into 'em, didn't you? Glad you weren't hurt." He wrote on for a moment, and then he looked up and wheeled about in his chair. "Well, what can I do for you?" he asked.

"I've come to take my medicine," said Truesdale. "Miss Heath handed those orders on to me as I passed Milvale. I was in a hurry and 'phoned her from the yard office to hand on both copies.

Then I forgot all about them. I was hustling over to Arlington for that Forty-eight on the original time."

The Old Man packed his pipe full of tobacco and stuffed it down with a stubby thumb. He looked at Truesdale across the rising smoke as he applied the match.

"And then what?" he asked.

"Why," said Truesdale in astonishment, "I've come to take my medicine. I know I lost my job the minute we hit. But I wanted to give you your chance to say so."

The Old Man took his pipe from his mouth and laughed.

"Truesdale," he said slowly, pointing the moist pipestem at the engineer, "you want to take lessons in speech. You've held your tongue so long that you don't know how to use it when you try. Get out of here. Go on back to work. I know you'd like to be a hero, but I don't need any heroes to help me run this road. What I need is good, capable engineers—like you. Get out!"

TRUESDALE blanched. Had the girl disobeyed him? Had she told the Old Man the truth before Truesdale got to him?

"But—" he began.

"But, nothing!" the Old Man interrupted. "Truesdale, you are an unmitigated falsifier. In other words, you are 'lyin' like a horsethief. And it isn't necessary. Will you get out?"

Truesdale got out. Somehow he made his way through the outer room and down the stairs. He was bewildered.

He went up the road by which he had come, walking slowly, with his head on his chest. A little resentment toward Eleanor came to him. Why hadn't she done as he had told her to do? Was it because she wouldn't let him do that much for her? He lost his temper.

"I'll go over and have it out with her," he said. "I suppose she's crying her heart out. That'll be tough. Why couldn't she have been game to go through with it? What does she suppose it matters about me?"

In fifteen minutes he rang the bell of Eleanor's front door. Eleanor herself opened the door. At sight of her

Truesdale had a little shock. There was no sign of tears or grief about her. She was as pretty, as bright-eyed and smiling, as ever. He stared for a moment, and then he thought he understood. The suspicion and jealousy which he had felt toward Brooks swept up through him like a flame.

"Excuse me," said this man who had failed to woo. "I suppose you're going to be married. I suppose you're going to marry Brooks. You look happy. I thought I was doing you a favor in trying to hold your job for you, but I guess you won't need a job."

Eleanor laughed outright and stepped back from the door.

"Won't you come in, Mr. Truesdale?" she asked.

Truesdale, more bewildered than ever, stepped inside.

ABOUT that same time Turner, the fireman, was wending his way to the Milvale telegraph-office. He had come over that morning to see Brooks. He carried the figurative chip on his shoulder.

Turner had also called on Eleanor after the wreck, but he had been swifter than Truesdale. Coming in on the first train passing the wreck, he had hopped down at Milvale and had waited till Eleanor was off duty. He had walked home with her.

"That story of Truesdale's won't hold water," he said. "It'll come out that you forgot the order. It's a foolish thing Truesdale is doing. However, I—"

And he offered his heart and hand to Eleanor. Eleanor smiled. He thought her scornful. He was hurt, chagrined and angry.

"I suppose it's Truesdale," he said. "I guess that hero-stuff of his has got to you. That's all very well in its way, but it don't pay no house-rent. You never showed any preference for Truesdale."

Eleanor sighed, but so softly that the sound did not come to Turner's ears.

"Mr. Truesdale has never said anything to me in that way," she said. "Why, he has hardly looked at me."

"Hardly looked at you?" Turner exploded. "Well, if you'd seen him yes-

terday when he declared he was going to stand for what you did, you'd have thought he'd done some tall thinking about you. Never looked at you? He's crazy about you."

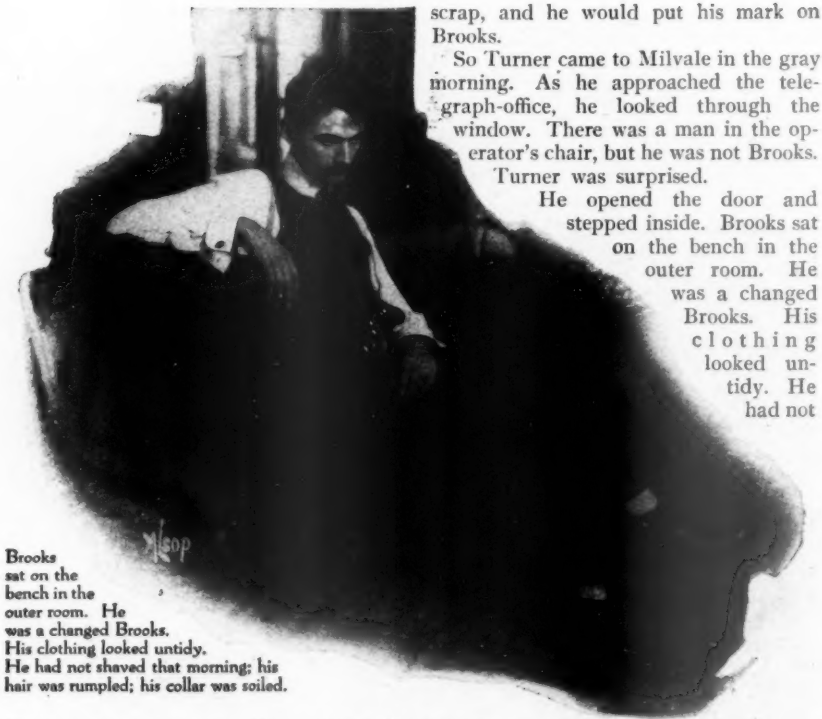
"Oh," said Eleanor; and having reached her house, she ran up the steps, her cheeks unusually red.

Turner caught the next freight-train for home. He rode in the caboose and he neither spoke nor answered any questions. He was lost in gloom. But that gloom, as the train neared the yards, was suddenly illuminated. Turner swallowed hard and clenched his fists.

"By thunder," he told himself, "it's



Eleanor herself opened the door. At sight of her Truesdale had a little shock. There was no sign of tears or grief about her. She was as pretty, as bright-eyed and smiling, as ever.



Brooks sat on the bench in the outer room. He was a changed Brooks. His clothing looked untidy. He had not shaved that morning; his hair was rumpled; his collar was soiled.

scrap, and he would put his mark on Brooks.

So Turner came to Milvale in the gray morning. As he approached the telegraph-office, he looked through the window. There was a man in the operator's chair, but he was not Brooks. Turner was surprised.

He opened the door and stepped inside. Brooks sat on the bench in the outer room. He was a changed Brooks. His clothing looked untidy. He had not

Brooks she's gone on. Why didn't I think of him? He's going to marry her. She's going to confess that she and not Truesdale forgot the order. When Brooks marries her, she wont need a job. That dude!"

And thus two of Eleanor's suitors, guided by the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence, came to the same conclusion.

Turner frothed and fumed on his way to his room. Disgust ran riot through him. He believed he could have stood it if Eleanor had chosen Truesdale, for everybody knew Truesdale was all man. But to think of a girl like Eleanor tying up to a thing like Brooks! It was fierce, the fireman said to himself.

Out of his anger a resolution came. It was resolution which brought a grin to his lips. By thunder, he'd go down and see Brooks in the morning—early, when nobody was about. He'd talk to Brooks in such a way that Brooks would have to resent it. Then there'd be a

shaved that morning; his hair was rumpled; his collar was soiled.

"What you been doin'—hittin' the grape?" Turner asked, for he believed in the attack direct. "You don't look like no happy bridegroom-to-be. You look to me like a sour pickle, made out of a small cucumber. You've taken advantage of a girl bein' out of a job to force yourself on her. You—you—"

Brooks rose. There was a new, glad look in his eyes.

"It makes me happy to have you here," he said. "I am very glad you came. You're just what I need. You will be better than a tonic for me. Wont you kindly step outside where we can have room? Please, Mr. Turner!"

He passed through the door, and Turner, without delay, followed him. Outside, a disheveled Brooks faced the fireman. To Turner's infinite surprise Brooks struck a fighting attitude.

"Wade right in," the operator invited. "Make it last. I feel like a long bout."

Turner stared at him.

"You mean you want to fight me?" he asked. "*Me?*"

Brooks laughed. In that laugh there was the bitterness, the regret, the smothering rage of a man greatly disappointed and humiliated.

"You?" he said. "Yes, you! Why not? You'll serve as well as another."

Turner put up his hands and advanced. A detailed account of the battle is not important. At the end of ten minutes Turner was bathing his face in hot water from the telegraph-office stove. Brooks again occupied the bench. He was scarcely more disheveled than he had been before.

"Where did you learn it, kid?" Turner asked.

"At the Y. M. C. A. gym," Brooks answered. "I'm a Y. M. C. A. lad, you know. I'm a sissy, a dude, a dandy."

"Uh-huh," Turner agreed.

The telephone-bell rang. Brooks answered the call.

"That was Truesdale," he said, when he had listened for a minute and had hung up the receiver. "He wanted to congratulate me on being a man in going to the boss to confess I forgot that order."

Turner lifted a bruised, wondering face.

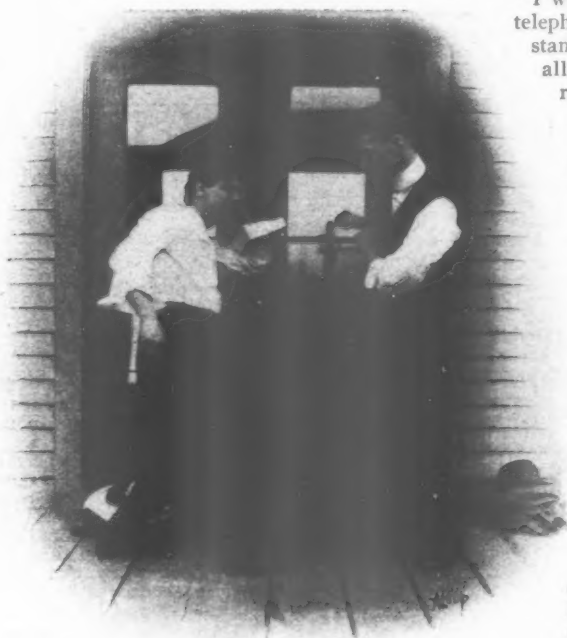
"You forgot it?" he cried.

"Me," Brooks returned. "Miss Heath had a toothache. She came down and asked me to work for her while she went to a dentist. That was why I was on duty in her trick. The sight of her suffering made me lose my head. I asked her to marry me. She wouldn't. When she had gone uptown, I set the block white, forgetting that order, and went for a walk to calm down. In the meantime you fellows got by me. I didn't remember the order till the wreck was reported over the wire.

"I was here when Truesdale telephoned to Miss Heath to stand pat. I saw his game, all right. So I hustled right up to the Old Man and confessed the whole business. I thought I'd beat Truesdale out on the hero-stuff. A lot of good it did me!" He paused and rumbled his hair savagely. "Truesdale and Miss Heath are going to be married to-morrow, so Truesdale says. He keeps his job and gets the girl. That's what he gets. What do I get, I wonder?"

"You don't get as much as Truesdale does," said Turner. He continued to apply the hot water to sundry bruises. "And it's a cinch you don't get as much as I did," he added.

"You mean you want to fight me?" Turner asked. "*Me?*" Brooks laughed. "You?" he said. "Yes, you! Why not? You'll serve as well as another."



ECHO ALLEN is the daughter of a prominent Southern jurist. Her mother is a cold patrician, and her brother Chisholm a young drunkard. The mother believes that a gentleman is a gentleman, drunk or sober. But Echo has grown out of this old Southern idea.

Foremost among Echo's admirers are Harry Sevier, a brilliant and wealthy young lawyer, and Cameron Craig, one of the new rich, head of the liquor trust and a profligate, and as determined to win Echo as Sevier is. The girl loves Sevier.

Sevier loses the case for a rough sawyer, Paddy the Brick, accused of stealing, whom he knows to be innocent. Echo is amazed and puzzled. Only Craig divines that Sevier's eloquence failed because he was drunk.

Craig asks Echo to marry him. She refuses. He tells her of his rival's drinking. She declines to believe it, but later Sevier tells her that it is true. Silently he vows never again to touch liquor.

Craig is more determined to win Echo. He is also determined that Judge Allen, Echo's father, shall hand down a pending decision, in favor of the liquor trust.

After Sevier has kept his abstinence-vow for a year, he calls on Echo and is warmly received. He is just telling her of his victory over drink, and of his love for her, when a cry from Judge Allen's library sends Echo running to her father. She finds him collapsed and picks up a photograph of a letter written by himself when Echo was a baby. The letter is addressed to a woman and asks her to elope with him.

That night the Judge has almost decided to commit suicide to get away from the consequences of the one blot on his life, when Echo enters. She learns that some fateful old letters of her father's have fallen into Craig's hands and that Craig threatens to make them public unless he wins the decision he wants in the liquor-trust suit. In the morning she leaves early, ostensibly to visit an aunt, but really to go to Craig and offer to marry him if he will destroy the letters.

Sevier receives from Echo a note saying: "Think of me as gently as you can. I can never marry you—never!" At this death-blow to his hopes, he gives up his struggle against the liquor temptation—shaves off beard and mustache, dresses in old clothes and otherwise disguises himself—and takes the train for a neighboring city. There Sevier plunges into a drunken debauch. That night, while he is in a state of dementia from drink, he breaks into a certain large house. He

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A MAN"

finds others before him—Paddy (who on his release from prison has turned burglar) and a companion kneeling before a safe.

Then he hears a servant admit a woman and presently hears the woman's voice at the telephone in the next room—the voice of Echo Allen, telling Cameron Craig that she is in his house waiting for him, and that she will marry him if he will give up the letters.

Craig comes in and arranges with Echo to have the marriage performed

that night. Craig steps into the room where the housebreakers and Sevier are—and Paddy the Brick promptly shoots him down. Sevier snatches the letters from the open safe and gives them to Echo, who does not recognize him. Then he hurries her away and allows himself to be captured by the police to throw them off her trail. Craig recognizes Sevier and falsely identifies him as the man who shot him.

CRAIG recovers to an extent, but his mental faculties remain paralyzed by the bullet-wound. Sevier is placed upon trial for the shooting. He is not recognized and is sentenced to the penitentiary.

Sevier is placed in a cell with Paddy the Brick. The man is imbibed. And Sevier is as bitter. He believes Echo recognized him and will not come forward to help him, by quietly getting his pardon from the governor.

After months Echo visits the prison. She sees Sevier in the workshop, but not close enough to recognize him. However, she is convinced he is not the man who shot Craig: that man was short.

A few days later Sevier escapes to his mountain shooting-bungalow. There he is nursed back to health.

When Sevier returns to his old home, not even Echo suspects why he has been away. Sevier joins the temperance party. At its convention he makes a speech which results in his being nominated for governor, and he accepts.

Meanwhile Craig has been operated upon by a great surgeon in Buda-Pesth and comes back to America. He learns of Sevier's candidacy, suspects the truth and determines to crush him. So Craig obtains permission to bring Paddy the Brick from the penitentiary and while Sevier is making a speech asks Paddy if he can identify Sevier as his cellmate, Number 239.

"I don't know whether he's 239 or not," answers Paddy, "but I'd swear to anything that would fix him! That's the lawyer that let them send me up two years ago!"



The Heart of a Man

The final installment of the novel for which a hundred thousand book-lovers have been waiting.

By Hallie Erminie Rives

Author of "Satan Sanderson," "Hearts Courageous," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD CULTER

CHAPTER XLV

THE CHASM

THE elevator deposited Harry at the third floor, where was the suite of rooms that he had occupied while in town during the campaign, because they were more accessible than his own apartment. The outer chamber of the suite was set with all the paraphernalia of a committee-room, with a huge writing-table and several small desks holding telegraph-instruments installed to receive the returns. To-morrow would find it humming with excitement, but it was deserted now. He had given Suzuki, his valet, the evening off.

He shut the door and stood a moment leaning against it. His eyes were blank, his face set. He had not known of Cameron Craig's journey abroad; and in

the rush of the campaign he had not seen the newspaper paragraph which told of the success of the operation in Budapest. But in the single look across the pavement he had leaped to the truth. Craig had recovered his faculties—there had been full knowledge and vengeful purpose in the haggard eyes. What Harry had dreaded, the possibility he had of late locked in an inner chamber of his mind, had come to pass. All was finished! The sword of Damocles was about to fall!

What remained? To creep away, he, the leader in the fight? To flee, like the discovered thief, as he had once thought of doing? Even that was impossible now. He knew his enemy too well to suppose that he would have left that way open! The other was but playing with him, like a cat with a mouse, till the moment came publicly to denounce him. For with a kind of prescience he guessed

Craig's real purpose, to seize the climactic moment and abstract from his humiliation the last ounce of sensationalism.

All night, in the silent, empty apartment, under the brilliant lights, Harry strode up and down—up and down tirelessly, his face white, his hands clenched, confronting the blank wall that reared before him. Temptation, in its most insidious form, fell upon him. Why should he not brazen it out? After all, the burden of proof was upon his accuser. He had destroyed the record-card which had contained his physical measurements. Jubilee Jim could be depended upon to swear to his presence at the bungalow through the winter: wild horses would drag no other story from Jim's faithful lips. Simple and God-fearing as the old negro was, love for his master was one of the prime articles of his emotional and uncomplex religion. For that love he would unquestioningly risk even the fires of the material hell of which his Bible told him! Such an alibi would hold. What other proof could Craig bring forward, further than a fortuitous resemblance, materially weakened now by hair and beard, to a one-time convict in a penitentiary in another State?

Was he not doubly justified in this deception? He was really innocent. If he forswore himself a thousand times, it would be in the way both of justice and expediency. It would solve the problem. The new cause needed him. Had he any right to fling himself away, merely in the interest of fictitious truth, on the mawkish principle of "Thou shalt not do evil that good may come?"

Yet, to perjure himself! To know himself liar and hypocrite, even in the hour when he should kiss the holy volume in the vows of a high office! To bind that faithful servant on the mountain to a black perjury—which would shadow his imagination with the smoke of the eternal burning!

Harry flung himself suddenly on his knees, and leaned his forehead against the dark wainscoting. He knew that he uttered no word, but all his being seemed to resolve itself into an inarticulate cry for aid. It was the first appeal of his life to something outside of

himself, the first cry of human weakness, groping in its utter hopelessness for the Infinite. It was the last step of the long way Harry had traveled—from self-abasement to remorse and awakening conscience, through struggle with appetite, to victory over himself, self-abnegation, acquiescence in the great law of retribution, and finally to prayer.

And out of the deep to which he had called, calmness at length came to him; and with it came a clear and steady purpose. As dawn took down the red drawbars of the sky to let in the day, he threw open a shutter and stood looking down with aching eyes upon the drowsily waking street. There should be no lying denial, no cowardly evasion—nothing less than the naked truth. If fate, if God, demanded this last thing of him,—if only so could he balance the account,—he would not repine. He had fought the fight; and at the last, so far as he could, he would keep the faith!

BEFORE the hotel had awakened that election morning, Harry was in his own apartment. He had left a note for Brent, who was to be in charge at the hotel suite, saying briefly that he would not appear that day, but would be with the committee at eight o'clock. He had sent the same message also to Judge Allen. He told Suzuki to admit no one, disconnected his telephone and thereafter remained at his desk writing, a plate of sandwiches at his elbow, bending himself to the final arrangement of the details of his personal affairs—as he might have done, he thought once, if by some clairvoyancy he foresaw that to-morrow he would die. Death, indeed, would have been a welcome solution if by it he could have bought extrication. Was he not going, living, to a worse death than he should ever die?

As the mantel-clock struck seven, he laid the last written paper in the desk-drawer and rising, went into his dressing-room. He bathed and dressed—the last time in his life, he told himself, that he should don the evening habiliments of a gentleman—grave-clothes! For the blow would not be delayed. To-morrow, no doubt, the State would ring with his downfall. To-night—in the

hour of his victory, if victory should be his—he would write *finis* to the final chapter and surrender himself to the law.

It was just at the half-hour when Harry opened the outer door of his apartment. But he did not pass through. Three men had been waiting silently just across the threshold. One of them was Craig. They entered without a word; Craig shut the door, and one of the others took his stand before it.

CHAPTER XLVI

CRAIG STRIKES

HARRY had stepped back as they entered. He had not been startled at the ambush; he had gone past surprises. He was conscious only of a cold preparedness and a kind of dull wonder as to the form of their errand. The purpose in Craig's face left no cause for any speculation as to their intent. He looked at the other's two companions, perfect types of the "heeler," burly and with brutally cunning features, that wore now a gloze of satisfaction in the work that was toward. They were not in uniform—it was not an arrest, then. What did Craig intend to do? Sevier turned, set his hat on the hall table and passed back into the sitting-room.

Craig followed him. Harry now saw that he carried a compact bundle under his arm. He snapped the cord and disclosed a costume—jacket and trousers of black and yellow-gray stripes and a flat, peaked cap of dingy canvas. Around one arm of the jacket was a leather band which bore a metal number—239!

"Put them on," commanded Craig shortly, "—over what you are wearing. They'll be large enough."

A painful mist was before Harry's eyes. He understood. Craig meant to give him up stamped with the old felon character, clothed in the unmistakable livery of the convict! Well, if not to-night, to-morrow. What did it matter?

As he drew on the loathsome garments, buttoning the jacket close up to his chin, their very touch seemed to cling insupportably to his flesh. The smell of the coarse fulled cloth in his nostrils gaye

him a qualm as of actual physical sickness, and the feel of the canvas cap across his forehead burned it like a brand.

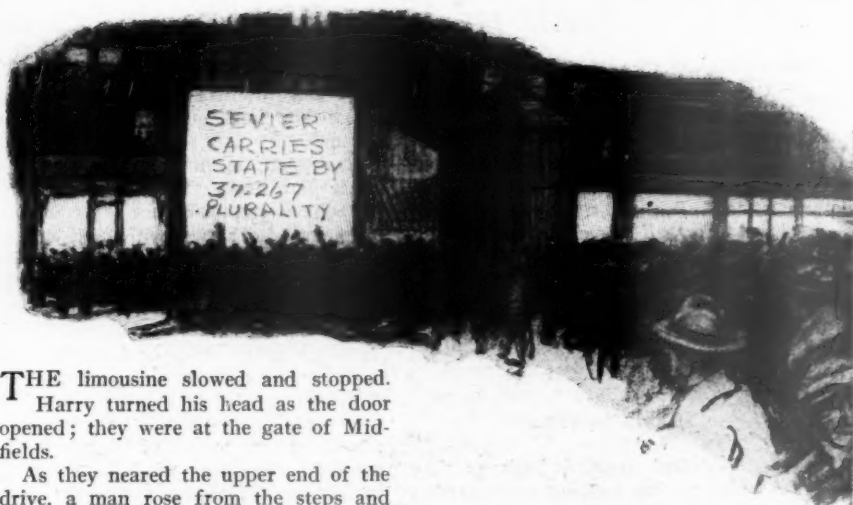
Craig had taken from his pocket a black cloth mask. "Now this," he said. "I believe you wore one in your last burglary," he added with cold malevolence. "I am disposed to miss no realistic touch, believe me."

Harry put on the mask, the lower hem of which fell below his beard. Through its eyeholes he looked evenly at the sneering, implacable face opposite. A peculiar apathy had come to him. The deep humiliation—even the cheap and ghastly sensationalism of the mask—did not touch him. Like the hapless voyager caught in the rapids above the great falls, he was watching the nearing brink with a kind of fascination and with the roar of the cataract in his ears.

One of the men had opened a window to peer down into the street. "All clear," he announced briefly, and Craig went to the hall and opened the door.

A monster limousine with curtains drawn waited at the curb, and on the front seat sat a figure at whose pallid face and red-rimmed eyes Harry gazed without a start but with a strange sensation of fitness. Here indeed was the real thief who had shot Craig, but leagued now with his enemy to his undoing!

Sitting in the dark interior, as the car sped along with its silent company, Harry remembered another ride of two years before, when he had flung through the night flying from his own conscience, incarnate in the figure that now rode beside the chauffeur. Was he never to lay that old ghost? He noted dully that the streets were jostling with eager throngs which made compact eddies here and there before some newspaper bulletin-board or flaring club window which displayed the reports of the voting, as, township by township, county by county, the tally came in. On one the legend "Sevier Carries State" was being posted, and a muffled cheer was wafted after. He shut his eyes. Almost he could have thought himself in the grip of some outré, high-colored dream—but he knew that it was no dream.



THE limousine slowed and stopped. Harry turned his head as the door opened; they were at the gate of Midfields.

As they neared the upper end of the drive, a man rose from the steps and came toward them. It was Lawrence Treadwell. He started as if he had been stung at sight of the masked and striped figure and its stolid escort. He turned on Craig, his eyes blazing with amazement and anger.

"My God!" he cried. "You haven't dared—but this is infamous! It's an outrage! You—"

"Keep your place!" snarled Craig. "I tell you I know what I'm doing!"

"It's my private opinion you're as crazy as a March hare," retorted the other, "but if you *are* right, I'll have nothing to do with it—do you understand? Nothing! I don't care *what* your evidence is!"

Craig turned his back on him and led the way up the steps, and after an instant's hesitation Treadwell followed. Through an open window Harry glimpsed the interior of the east room, dismantled now for the evening's strenuous occupation, where several masculine figures were grouped about a table, excitedly working over charts, and he could hear the irritant buzz of the telephone as it signaled the bulletins that were beginning now to pour into the busy hotel suite at the other end of the wire. Craig did not ring at the big door but led the way along the porch to a French window of the library, which stood ajar. He peered into it; then with an exclamation of satisfaction he motioned the two attendants back, said a low word

to Paddy the Brick and flung the window open.

Harry entered, Craig and Paddy the Brick next. Treadwell followed and drew the window to behind him.

CHAPTER XLVII

WITH HIS BACK TO THE WALL

IN the wide, lamp-lighted room into which this weird quartette had so startlingly entered, two men had been sitting smoking before the capacious fireplace—Juge Allen and his friend Governor Eveland. At the sudden apparition, both had turned sharply toward the window—two strangely dissimilar figures: the Judge slight and spare and scholarly, his pale, finely chiseled features tinged in the glow; the other deep-chested and powerful, of herculean mold, with a rugged face made almost patriarchal by the long gray beard which swept his chest: both countenances for the instant curiously alike in their expression of shocked surprise.

The Judge arose abruptly from his chair, his gaze shifting from the masked figure in striped clothes to Craig's face, eagerly alight and triumphant. He had no welcome for this summary entrance.

"Who is responsible for this intrusion?" he asked coldly.

Craig laughed. "I am responsible,"

The streets were jostling with eager throngs which made compact eddies here and there before some newspaper bulletin-board or flaring club-window which displayed the reports of the voting, as, township by township, county by county, the tally came in. On one the legend "Sevier Carries State" was being posted, and a muffled cheer was wafted after.



he said. "I have business with you both. For some time, as you are aware, I have been debarred from such pursuits. However, I am now myself again, and free to pick up lost threads. Hence my call to-night."

"It can wait a more opportune time." The Judge spoke with asperity. "Moreover, I must ask you to remember that I have servants to announce my guests."

"Apologies may be in order later," Craig returned, "if my errand does not justify itself. My business with you is to inform you that you and your friends have been giving countenance to a man whom the law is tracking down—a convict who escaped from prison in the next State some months ago. You see him before you."

He looked at the Governor, who had neither moved nor spoken—he had small liking for Cameron Craig. "My business with you, Governor Eveland," went on Craig, "is to demand that you call upon the local authorities to arrest this jailbird, pending his extradition to your own jurisdiction. I have brought with me, under my personal surety, an inmate of the penitentiary"—he pointed to Paddy the Brick

—"who was this criminal's cellmate and who has identified him."

There was a slight pause before the Governor replied. He had shared his host's irritation at the unceremonious entrance and this was allayed by no regard for Craig, whom he had always reckoned an evil influence in the activities of the State of which he himself was chief executive. Now the pallid face with its bandage across the temples, the distempered eyes and strange excitement, smote him with distaste. Yet—there were these others with him; and there was the third figure, seemingly acquiescent, whose dismal habit proclaimed him a convict.

"I like neither your method nor your manner, Mr. Craig," said the Governor. "This would seem to be a matter for the police, not for me or, I take it, for Judge Allen. Why you choose to drag this man here, at such a moment, with this skullduggery of mask and stripes, I cannot imagine."

Craig laughed again, sneeringly. "A little fancy of my own," he said, "and regard for the dramatic proprieties—"

Treadwell strode forward with an exclamation.

"Judge—Governor Eveland!" he said explosively. "Let me say something. I came here to-night purely in my capacity of Cameron Craig's attorney, intent only on saving him from what seemed to me a piece of brazen lunacy. But I begin to see that there is something behind this, and if it isn't lunacy, it is something I like still less. I withdraw here and now from any connection with him or this action."

"Withdraw and be damned!" Craig flung at him savagely. "I know what I am about!" His voice rose. "That man, Governor Eveland, is an escaped prisoner from the penitentiary of your State! Tear off his mask and see for yourselves who he really is—this fine thief and would-be murderer—the man who shot me down a year ago!"

"Stop!" The Governor's voice rang through the room. He was on his feet now, stern authority in every line of his posture. "Mr. Craig, listen to me! You have thrust yourself here without warrant of right or of invitation, in a matter which you—not I—have elected to make my business. Very well: I take the affair and this prisoner into my own hands. Do you understand?"

He paused, his lips clipped shut. The outburst, vicious with suppressed fury, had given him a lightning-like glimpse into something unguessed in the situation. The man before him, then, in this convict dress, was the burglar convicted of that old shooting—the prisoner whom he had seen at the courthouse and whose personality had so attracted and puzzled him. Yet there was more beneath Craig's attitude than an understandable desire to punish the man who had shot him—more than that in those infuriated eyes, shaking hands and malicious triumph. The Governor had a hatred of persecution. His mind worked according to a law of stern and inflexible justice; yet to him justice opened itself to no assault of man's passions.

Under that holding look Craig sat down heavily, angry arrogance in his

face. Treadwell took a chair near him, and Paddy the Brick remained standing in the background, his small eyes glancing furtively from one to the other.

The Governor resumed his seat and bent his deliberate gaze on the figure that had been standing movelessly before him. A quick memory had come to him of the other's face, now hidden, as he had once seen it—clear-eyed, vivid and forceful, strangely lacking in the earmarks of the criminal, a face that had often recalled itself to his mind since that day. He had no vulgar curiosity, but the patent mystery in the background called to him strangely.

"Are you, as this man alleges, a prisoner who some months ago broke jail in the adjoining State?"

"I am." The voice, muffled by the mask, was low but distinct.

"The man who shot him in his library?"

"No."

The questioning, deep-gray eyes looked steadily at the mask—it seemed as if the gaze would bore through the cloth. "But you were found guilty of that offense!"

"I was convicted, yes."

The Governor was silent a moment; then his hand reached for the pen on the table. "On the admission, then," he said slowly, "it is my duty to request the authorities to take you into custody. You are aware of your rights under the law?"

The striped figure bowed. "I am. I shall waive extradition. With your permission, however, I should like to make a statement."

"He can make that in the jail," interposed Craig contemptuously. "Take off his mask and send for the police."

The Governor frowned. "He can make it here and now, if he so chooses. This is not your house, Mr. Craig. If you do not care to listen, there will be no objection to your withdrawal—with your witness."

There was a fleeting pause, in which a livid red mounted to Craig's brow, dark against the bandage. Then the Governor turned.

"Do you take your solemn oath that what you are about to say is the truth,

the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

"I do."

The Governor leaned back in his chair. "You may make your statement," he said quietly.

HARRY bowed. He was feeling a chill sense of estrangement, as though the bars that were so soon to shut him from the life of which he had been a part had already fallen between him and his friends. But he was oddly self-controlled. In the few moments he had been thinking swiftly—not of himself, but of the cause he represented, the men who had pinned their faith upon him and whom he had betrayed, whose leader, Judge Allen, sat there now ignorant of the ruin that overwhelmed them. To say to him, "I, Harry Sevier, whom you honored, whom you made the bearer of your party banner, reached forth for this trust knowing myself a hunted man, outlawed of honest folk!" They were his friends, his loyal comrades in the fight, men whose friendship had been tried out by long years! In this last hour he shrank from a judgment biased with sympathy, and a fierce craving was rising in him for a justification based on no personal appeal.

He took a step backward to the mantel and stood thus, a little removed from them, looking from one to the other. He spoke in a low voice—not the alert, vibrant voice of the old Harry Sevier, but one alien, metallic and strangely devoid of feeling.

"What I have to say may soon be said. It was not of my own will that I came here with covered face, and since this masquerade is not of my choosing, it may serve its purpose a moment longer. You, Judge Allen, know me well. Governor Eveland, you also are not unacquainted with me. With everyone in this room I have come in contact—not as a convict, but as a citizen and an honest man. My association with you, Judge Allen, has involved certain responsibilities, and these I have accepted while I have lain under the law. For this I owe you a greater reparation than I can ever make. I know that justification in the eyes of the world is impossible, but in your own

mind—in the minds of others who stand with you—it perhaps may be given me. But a justification that springs from personal sympathy is empty to me. I want it as man to man. For this reason I keep on the mask a little longer."

He paused. The Governor had not spoken; he had settled back in his great chair, one hand in his beard. The Judge was leaning intently forward, his hands clasped; he had never taken his eyes from the speaker, save once to glance at Craig, who sat with narrowed eyes and heavy lips curved in a malicious sneer. Treadwell's elbow was on his knee, his chin in his palm, his brows drawn into a frown that told nothing; and behind all stood Paddy the Brick, furtively watching.

WHEN the striped figure spoke again, it was in a voice which held a first thin thrill of feeling:

"I have said that I lay under the law, but it was through that law's error. I was unjustly accused and wrongfully convicted. I was innocent."

The Governor spoke, coldly and deliberately. "You were taken at midnight in the Craig house."

"I had entered it for no dishonest purpose. I broke no bolt or bar—that had been done before my arrival."

"You allege, then, that you were not in company with the robbers?"

"I was not. They were there when I entered."

"Why did you not give the alarm?"

"They made me their prisoner. A pistol was at my head."

"You did not so testify at your trial."

"I declined to testify at all."

The Governor nodded. "That is true," he said. "I remember."

There was a moment's pause; then the voice continued:

"It is sometimes inevitable that the law, whose purpose it is to be just, is terribly unjust. Sometimes the sole clue to a situation which seems to spell inevitable guilt lies in a fact, small in itself, whose significance is such that it cannot be brought forward. This was my case. The fact which would have cleared me could not be told. I became a convict. For six months I was an in-

mate of the penitentiary. Then—the way opened to freedom, and I took it. What man would not have done so? I acknowledged no right of the law over my body. I went back to my former life and took up my old profession here in this city."

"Here!" The Judge muttered, under his breath.

"And in that life I found opening responsibilities. New work called to me. My help was needed. I could not shirk it. I knew the risk always, but I counted it small. And the need was great! With such a work waiting my hand, a labor that no one else, it seemed, could do,—one upon which much depended,—was I to stand aside, to withhold my effort on the slender chance that discovery might sometime overtake me?"

The speaker seemed to have forgotten the Governor, to have swept all else to one side and to be addressing now only the Judge, in an appeal that touched the older man profoundly. It was, he thought, as though the man's whole soul was crying out for forgiveness and absolution for an injury unwittingly inflicted.

"The one thing has now happened which must lay the past bare. I must meet this—the scandal, the shame. My life, all that makes life worth living, ends to-night; and I stand before you with the bare soul of a truthful man. You have known me and trusted me. You and others have put faith in me—" The voice, for the first time, faltered and fell.

The Judge's head had been bowed, but he lifted it now.

"God alone knows the secrets of our hearts," he said, heavily. "If you were innocent—but of that how can I say? My view of your actions since your escape—those which may affect me—must necessarily hang upon that point. I could believe that you are not a burglar. It may be that knowledge of your true identity will presently convince me of this. And I might be persuaded that your presence in the Craig house that night was no more than an unfortunate coincidence. But the evidence of the shooting appeared at the time irrefutable. I cannot conceive that the mere

knowledge of who you are would be likely to affect my belief in that respect. Your statement as to that is not only wholly unsupported, but was—and is—bluntly contradicted by the man who was shot."

He ceased speaking. No word came from the striped figure—only a slight movement of one hand, expressing at once resignation and futility. Then the hand was lifted to the mask.

GOVERNOR Eveland, however, stayed the action of revealment with a sudden gesture.

"One moment," he said quickly. "We have gone so far, I should like to go a step farther—and still forensically, if you please. The question of identity may wait. Do I understand that you deny that you fired that shot?"

"I do."

Craig lurched forward in his chair. "This is no trial-court!" he exclaimed savagely. "He has had his hearing once."

"Be silent!" commanded the Governor. "This man is in my hands, not in yours!" The warning was heavy and vengeful, and it held now all the electric energy that had made the man famous through a long career of criminal practice before his governorship days, and that now, unleashed, dominated the room. Before it Craig whitened with a surge of anger that sent a keen probe of pain through his temple. He sat back, breathing hard, his great fingers working.

The Governor was leaning forward now, his hand on the table.

"If I recollect,—and I think I do, as certain aspects of the case interested me at the time,—there was a witness to the shooting besides the men who were assumed to be your comrades. There was a woman there."

"She did not see my face."

"But she might have seen the face of the shooter. Why did she not see yours?"

"I wore a mask."

"Is not a mask, in itself, a badge of criminal intent?"

"It was not mine. One of the men dropped it when they ran."

"If, being innocent," the insistent voice went on, "you put on the mask, the only presumption is that you did not wish the woman to recognize you. Therefore she knew you. Did you speak to her?"

There was no reply.

"If you spoke to her, it was when the man who had fired the shot was in flight. Your words to her, verified by herself,—if she were reputable,—would be evidence that you did not do the shooting. Why, then, did you not call her as a witness?"

The long French window had swung again ajar, and the cooling evening breeze rustled the paper that lay upon the table. From the far road there came a muffled, long-drawn cheer.

"If the significant fact which could be brought forward at your trial was the identity of this missing witness, if her testimony would show that the law had erred,—if it might operate to establish your innocence,—would not she herself justify you in revealing it?"

The silence, a longer one this time, remained unbroken.

"Do you still refuse to tell her name?"

"I do."

The Governor leaned to the table and picked up the pen. But on the instant there was a quick step behind them.

All turned. Echo stood framed in the window—a figure in filmy white.

"I was that woman, Governor Eveland," she said clearly.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE HEART OF A WOMAN

FOR an instant there was a blank silence. The Judge sat as if stunned, one hand across his lips, the other clenched on his knee. Harry's breath had caught in his throat; he stood taken aback and confounded, his thoughts shocked apart and dispersed. He forgot all else, was conscious only of the deep fire of her eyes and the white surge of her breast, only that he loved her and that she stood on the brink of ruin—she whose name was unspotted from the world! An irrepressible exclamation burst from his lips.

The Governor put up his hand. "We will have the truth!" he said sternly.

He stood erect, his bushy brows drawn together, his eyes on the girl like sparkling points of steel. Slowly he turned his gray head toward Craig.

"It was Miss Allen," said Craig. His smoldering gaze had fastened on her with a savage joy. The drama was rushing now to its inevitable *dénouement*.

The crisis had come to Echo with fateful suddenness. From the porch—whither she had stolen, full of excitement, to listen to the bulletins from the east room that spelled victory for the cause of Harry Sevier—she had glimpsed through the French window that gathering in the library—the striped, masked figure standing as before his judges, Craig with his bandaged temples, the silent listeners. The mask and the convict garb recalled that terrible midnight at Craig's house and the later episode at the jail, blent in a shuddering composite, even as the significance of the scene came home to her with a sudden horrifying clarity. It was true then: Craig had returned recovered! The escaped convict had been retaken, and he had come forward to repeat his mistaken testimony! In her confusion of mind she did not reason: it did not occur to her that here was no tribunal of justice. The suggestion was overpowering: she only knew that within that room men sat again in judgment upon him with whose fate her own peace of mind was so entangled.

And Echo knew the truth! Two things had come to her at the same instant: Craig did not intend to involve her, and the convict knew who she was. As she leaned against the sill listening, the meaning of that obstinate refusal to answer had thrilled her. He, like Craig, had known her, then, all along! Yet he had not betrayed her; nor would he betray her even now! The thought had spurred her resolve and sent her forward into the room with that confession on her lips.

SHE came forward slowly, with what seemed a pathetic weariness. Her face was without color, and there were bruised shadows beneath her eyes.

mate of the penitentiary. Then—the way opened to freedom, and I took it. What man would not have done so? I acknowledged no right of the law over my body. I went back to my former life and took up my old profession here in this city."

"Here!" The Judge muttered, under his breath.

"And in that life I found opening responsibilities. New work called to me. My help was needed. I could not shirk it. I knew the risk always, but I counted it small. And the need was great! With such a work waiting my hand, a labor that no one else, it seemed, could do,—one upon which much depended,—was I to stand aside, to withhold my effort on the slender chance that discovery might sometime overtake me?"

The speaker seemed to have forgotten the Governor, to have swept all else to one side and to be addressing now only the Judge, in an appeal that touched the older man profoundly. It was, he thought, as though the man's whole soul was crying out for forgiveness and absolution for an injury unwittingly inflicted.

"The one thing has now happened which must lay the past bare. I must meet this—the scandal, the shame. My life, all that makes life worth living, ends to-night; and I stand before you with the bare soul of a truthful man. You have known me and trusted me. You and others have put faith in me—" The voice, for the first time, faltered and fell.

The Judge's head had been bowed, but he lifted it now.

"God alone knows the secrets of our hearts," he said, heavily. "If you were innocent—but of that how can I say? My view of your actions since your escape—those which may affect me—must necessarily hang upon that point. I could believe that you are not a burglar. It may be that knowledge of your true identity will presently convince me of this. And I might be persuaded that your presence in the Craig house that night was no more than an unfortunate coincidence. But the evidence of the shooting appeared at the time irrefutable. I cannot conceive that the mere

knowledge of who you are would be likely to affect my belief in that respect. Your statement as to that is not only wholly unsupported, but was—and is—bluntly contradicted by the man who was shot."

He ceased speaking. No word came from the striped figure—only a slight movement of one hand, expressing at once resignation and futility. Then the hand was lifted to the mask.

GOVERNOR Eveland, however, stayed the action of revealment with a sudden gesture.

"One moment," he said quickly. "We have gone so far, I should like to go a step farther—and still forensically, if you please. The question of identity may wait. Do I understand that you deny that you fired that shot?"

"I do."

Craig lurched forward in his chair. "This is no trial-court!" he exclaimed savagely. "He has had his hearing once."

"Be silent!" commanded the Governor. "This man is in my hands, not in yours!" The warning was heavy and vengeful, and it held now all the electric energy that had made the man famous through a long career of criminal practice before his governorship days, and that now, unleashed, dominated the room. Before it Craig whitened with a surge of anger that sent a keen probe of pain through his temple. He sat back, breathing hard, his great fingers working.

The Governor was leaning forward now, his hand on the table.

"If I recollect,—and I think I do, as certain aspects of the case interested me at the time,—there was a witness to the shooting besides the men who were assumed to be your comrades. There was a woman there."

"She did not see my face."

"But she might have seen the face of the shooter. Why did she not see yours?"

"I wore a mask."

"Is not a mask, in itself, a badge of criminal intent?"

"It was not mine. One of the men dropped it when they ran."

"If, being innocent," the insistent voice went on, "you put on the mask, the only presumption is that you did not wish the woman to recognize you. Therefore she knew you. Did you speak to her?"

There was no reply.

"If you spoke to her, it was when the man who had fired the shot was in flight. Your words to her, verified by herself,—if she were reputable,—would be evidence that you did not do the shooting. Why, then, did you not call her as a witness?"

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Governor leaned to the table and picked up the pen. But in the instant there was a quick step behind them. All turned. "I was that woman, Governor Eveland," she said clearly.

"Governor Eveland," she said, "you have known me all my life. I do not think you have ever had cause to doubt my word."

"There is no need to remind me of that, my child," he answered gravely. "Neither I nor anyone who knows you would believe you spoke anything but the truth."

A wan smile, in which was yet a glint of pride, crossed her face. "Then," she said, "I have faith that you will believe me now. I went to that house to gain a thing dearer than my own happiness. No one at home knew it."

She paused an instant, and turned upon Craig a look of mingled scorn and aversion. "This man had once done me the honor to ask me to marry him, and I had done myself the honor to refuse. He had in his hands—how it had come to him I have never known—a letter which he threatened to publish. It was a personal letter that had no bearing on the present,—one written before I was born,—but it had the power to bring pain and humiliation upon some one I loved."

The Judge lifted his head. "That is true," he said in a smothered voice. "I knew of the letter, and—of the threat."

She did not proceed at once; her gaze was still upon Craig, and she waited.

"It is true enough," he said, and burst into jarring laughter. "Yes, gentlemen, it is the fact. I had that letter, and I would have made my price on it!"

"Yes," she repeated deliberately, "you made your price. I went there that night, to your house, to beg you for that letter. I waited for you till you came, and when you would not give it to me otherwise, I agreed to marry you."

She faced the Governor again. "I was to marry him within the hour. Then—then came the shot from the alcove. I—I suppose I was mad with fright. There had been three men behind the curtains. Two ran—the man who had done the shooting and another. The third—"

She broke off and turned to the motionless figure in the striped clothes. "I know now that you were the third!" she said. "I thank you—with all my heart I thank you for what you did!"

There was no answer from behind the mask, and she again addressed the Governor:

"This man must have heard my pleading and pitied me. He thought of me before he thought of his own escape. He took the letter I had come for from the safe and gave it to me; then he dragged me to the door and told me to run. So I—I got away."

THE room was so still that one heard now, through the closed doors, the muffled click of the telegraph-keys in the east room, and the voices of the clerks calling the tally of figures. Wistfulness and pain had crept into her voice now.

"Next day the newspapers said the man who had fired the shot had been arrested. I believed this to be true, for though I went one day to the trial, I was in the courtroom only a few moments and I could not see the face of the man who was being tried."

The striped figure made a sudden involuntary movement. She had not seen him, then? Could it be that he had been mistaken, that she had not known?

"I believed it till months afterward, when I came back from Europe. Then I saw a ring which this man had given to his lawyer. It was like the one the man who had given me the letters had worn that night, and this made me afraid that a mistake had been made. I visited the penitentiary to find out. It was the day of the attack on the Warden—when this man was stabbed in his defense."

Again she paused, and her eyes shifted to the masked figure. "You must have known me," she said gently. "You must have known my name. Yet you never told. Do you think, whatever it might mean to me,—after what you did,—that I could keep silent, if the truth may help you now?"

Harry had no answer. Through and through the maze of his conflicting feeling was stabbing an assurance sharpened with unbelievable joy. He had been thinking her cowardly and calloused with worldly selfishness; here she was risking all—and not for him, Harry Sevier, whom she loved, but for an unknown convict!

The Governor was looking at her with intentness. "You mean that he is *not* the one who did the shooting?"

"He is not."

Craig sneered. "She says what she has been told to say," he said with dry lips. "You will understand why, presently."

"Perhaps," returned the Governor coldly, "I shall." Then, turning to Echo:

"How do you know this is not the man?"

"This man is tall; the man who did the shooting was short."

"But—his face. You saw it that night distinctly? Would you know it if you saw it again?"

"As well as I know yours."

He said no more, and after an instant's pause, she went on:

"Mr. Mason, his lawyer, had told me he believed that if the shooting could have been disproved, his client might have been cleared; and knowing what I did, it seemed to me that I must tell the whole. It was not easy; for while that night I had thought only of keeping the secret of the letter, I came to see later what the world would say of my presence there. And a woman's name is all she has. So—I made up my mind. But that same day I read that the man had escaped from prison. There was no longer any need then of my telling. There has been no need till now."

SHE paused and stood looking steadily at the Governor, her hands twisted together, her face white.

The Governor spoke, quietly and evenly:

"Let us go back to a matter of detail. I should like to picture the scene that night a little more distinctly. Where were you standing when the shot was fired?"

She changed her position slightly. "Here, nearly in the center of the room."

"And the man who shot from the alcove?"

"There." She pointed to one side, to the bay-window before which now stood Paddy the Brick.

The latter would have drawn away, but the Governor stayed him with a gesture. "No, stand where you are, if

you please," he said. And Paddy the Brick stood still, shifting his feet and ill at ease, his narrow eyes turning stealthily toward Craig.

To Echo the illusion was considerable, for the room was not unlike that other library in which had occurred the scene she was so painfully redrawing. There was the same effect of rich bookcases, of desk and picture-hung walls, and in lieu of the alcove was the big double window with its heavy drawn curtains. The Governor stretched his hand and tilted the shade of the lamp, so that its light fell full upon the latter, lighting the cringing face of the convict before it.

"What was the man who shot like?" he asked.

"He was middle-sized and thick-set, with light hair that sprang in a cowlick from his forehead. He—"

She had stopped abruptly. She was staring with wide, horrified eyes at the man who stood blinking in the radiance—at the up-thrust, sand-colored hair, the rounded shoulders, the red-rimmed eyes, which now held a trapped look of animal fear.

She stiffened. She pointed at him.

"You!" she cried. "*You are the man who fired that shot!*"

CHAPTER XLIX

THE GOVERNOR TAKES A HAND

ON the startled silence, already so tense with conflicting forces, the accusation fell with the suddenness of an electric shock.

Its effect on Paddy the Brick was instantaneous. He drew back, his hand clutching at the curtains. He was looking not at Echo, but past her at the Governor, who had risen towering in his place; and if ever guilt and the dread that is confession showed upon a face, it was written upon his, in lines that he who ran might read.

Craig started from his seat. "You fool!" he snarled at him.

But Paddy the Brick gave him no glance. The fear of the hunted was upon him; he saw himself taken in a snare, the witnesses to his unpunished act confronting him, and the hand of the



"Echo!" The cry seemed weirdly to have materialized from the very substance of her longing. The figure had turned from the fireplace—was standing before her—with uncovered face.

law clutching at him. He turned and with one desperate jerk tore the hangings aside, and with arms before his face, plunged bodily through the shattering glass of the bay window to the garden.

So abrupt and fateful had been the crash of his headlong flight that for a breath it seemed as if all there had been turned to stone. Craig first found voice.

"Enough of this farce!" he cried. "Governor Eveland, this man is an escaped convict, and I call upon you to do your duty!"

The Governor turned swiftly on him, his cavernous eyes flashing fire. His long forefinger shot out like a javelin.

"You coward and blackmailer!" he blazed. "The man you brought here as your witness was the one who shot you! His very flight is confession. And I believe you *knew he was the guilty one!*" His deep voice rang like a bell, quick with indignation and contempt. "You hate this man before you, and when he came between you and your plan, you tried to tie the noose about his neck!"

Craig's face was convulsed, his hands

moving in unnatural gestures. A writhing spot of pain was burning like a white-hot coal beneath the bandage on his head. He burst into a wild laugh.

"Damn your beliefs!" he shouted. "You know who I am! The whole State knows me! What I swore to I'll swear to again. You can't make black into white by your opinions. This

man is a convict—a *convict!* Do you hear? He is under sentence—"

The Governor had seated himself at the table and was writing swiftly. He looked up now.

"And I," he thundered, "am Governor. As such, I don't care who he is. I don't want to know. It is enough that I am convinced of his innocence, as I am of your perjury. Here is his pardon. From this moment he is free!"

He rose, and if honest indignation could have blasted, his look would have blasted the man who stood livid and gasping before him:

"Let me tell you one thing more, Cameron Craig! If you dare to drag his name or that of this woman into publicity now, to satisfy your mean revenge, I'll see that you are indicted, so help me God! We shall find whose testimony will be believed!"

Craig, swaying now on suddenly numb and uncertain feet, would have shouted too, but his tongue seemed tied, and a

Her voice fell lower till it was the merest whisper: "You were the convict—the man—in Craig's library?"

heavy torpor was clutching all his limbs. He heard his own voice come forth ragged and broken: "I—I dare! You—this—"

Tottering, he lurched to a chair and fell into it, even as the Governor's look took on a glare of outraged astonishment — for Craig's face now was drawn and contorted into a malignant grimace. But all at once this faded out; the features became expressionless, the eyes dull, and he slipped in a huddle from the chair to the floor.

He lay there upon his face without a word or movement. He did not hear the Governor's exclamation nor the voices about him, nor feel the touch of inquiring hands at heart and wrist. His passion had undone him. The dulling pulse beat on, but the brain had once more ceased its functioning; nor would it ever again quicken that inert body, at the behest of the great surgeon in Budapest or of any other.

OUTSIDE in the hall there were confusion and wondering voices, as the Governor, bending his great frame to the burden, with the aid of the Judge



and other willing hands, bore the helpless, sagging form to the car that waited at the foot of the drive with its attendants. Before he followed the rest, Treadwell had turned and held out his hand to the man in the convict dress, and there was in the gesture, no less than the warm clasp, assurance man to man of steadfast silence and a friendship that was to be without end.

In the silent room—in a quiet that seemed curiously heavy after the storm of ebullient passion and pain that had swept it—Echo, sitting motionless but with every vein throbbing painfully, saw the striped figure pass behind the big leather screen, to emerge a moment later,

still wearing the mask but clad now in the conventional black-and-white of masculine evening-dress. In his hand he carried a striped bundle. He laid this on the red coals of the grate, and the flames leaped up to wind it in a sheet of brightness, shaming, for one triumphant minute, the dim light of the shaded lamp. As he stood with his back to her, looking down upon the smoldering tinder, some trick in the posture brought her a quick thrill of wretchedness. In the radiance she buried her face in her hands.

"Echo!"

She started and looked up with a sudden wildness, for the cry seemed weirdly to have materialized from the very substance of her longing. The figure had turned from the fireplace—was standing before her—with uncovered face!

CHAPTER L

REVELATION

"YOU!" she said. "*You—you!*"

"Yes."

With her eyes upon him, she moved away with uncertain, backward steps. When she spoke again, it was with a quick breath that was like a sob, and in a voice scarcely audible, with breaks between the words: "It is—it was—you!"

"It was I."

"You!"

"Yes."

"All—the time?"

"All the time."

There was a silence. She had begun to tremble from head to foot. Her face was turned away, and her hands were shaking; she clenched them tight. Her voice fell lower, till it was the merest whisper:

"You were the—the convict—the man—in Craig's library?"

He came nearer. "Yes," he said.

She put one hand to her throat. "I—don't care to understand—now. I—I'm only trying—to realize—" She paused. The doming tinder in the grate broke and fell, and for a last instant a yellow-ochre burst of flame threw a bright golden veil about them. Two great tears rolled down her cheeks. "Then you,"

she whispered, "then you know why I went there. You could not believe that I—that I—"

"My darling!" His arms were around her now, drawing her close, close, till she could feel his heart thudding against her breast. He bent his head, and their lips clung into a kiss. "Never—never—that," he murmured, with his lips against her cheek, "though I must be forgiven very much. I was blind. I thought you knew—knew that it was really I there in the prison, knew and were willing that it should be! And all the while—"

"And I," she whispered, "I thought you had gone away, and didn't care—any more. And all along—all along—"

When they drew a little apart so that each might better see the other's face, the wonder and miracle had touched them both with a kind of awe. She looked at him, with lips that were still trembling under the startled glory in her eyes. "The day after that—that night—I went to your office. I saw my broken picture—and—the bottle. I guessed—I guessed—"

"It was true," he said. "I threw away my promise to you. I would have thrown myself away with it! But it was not to be, sweetheart! I have come back to you, dearest—dearest of all the world!"

So they stood haloed in the lamplight, clinging together, swayed and shaken, pouring forth tender confessions in broken words and silences, oblivious to the passage of time, to the clamor that had begun to rise from the rooms across the hall—to a sound that came over the tree-tops of the Avenue, blazing now with fireworks, the sound of jubilation and marching feet.

AT midnight the great porch of Midfields was hung gay with lanterns and bunting, and Harry stood watching the rear-guard of torch-bearers stream down the drive. The battalions had gathered like magic when the blowing of whistles announced that the returns from the crucial counties spelled certain victory. They had swung down the main street, a band at their head, a shouting, jostling army, to acclaim the Governor-elect.

ST. LOUIS
READING ROOM
PUBLIC
—1703
MAY

THE HEART OF A MAN

With his friends of the long fight—Judge Allen, Brent and a score of others—about him, he had spoken to them, a short speech full of feeling. Now the cheering was over and the throngs had trooped away.

As Governor Eveland stood with the Judge on the porch, looking out over the trampled lawn, Treadwell came up the drive.

"I thought," he said, "that you would like to know about Craig. He is as he was before they took him abroad for the operation. It is unlikely that there will ever be any change again, they think."

They heard him in silence, but across the mind of the older man was flashing a stern epitaph: "He hath digged a pit for his neighbor, and hath fallen into the midst of it himself." Presently he sighed—his thought had shifted to the unknown man he had pardoned that night.

"It has been a singular evening," he said. "I am sorry Sevier was not here earlier—when our convict came. Strange that even you, Treadwell, should not have seen his face! I wonder," he added musingly, "if we shall ever know who he was!"

The Judge shook his head—the same wonder was in his mind. Treadwell's face was inscrutable. The Governor's gaze strayed up the long porch, where, at the further end, a girl stood with the Governor-elect in the rosy glow of the lanterns. He laid his gaunt hand affectionately on the Judge's shoulder.

"Brave and true!" he said. "When I think of what she told us to-night, Beverly, I have no words!"

Treadwell broke the silence. He spoke with a little flush mounting in his face. "I hope I need not say that I—that what we have heard to-night—"

But the Judge stopped him. "My dear Treadwell!" he said in gentle reproof. "My dear Treadwell! We are all gentlemen!"

THE Governor-elect and the girl who stood beside him lingered a little longer in the shadow of the crimson

rambler. Down the Avenue, beyond the great gate, the band-music had throbbed to silence and the flambeaux clustered and faded and diminished. For a long time they stood in silence. The old house behind them was full of jovial voices and laughter, and every window was glowing with lights, but where they stood was quiet and peace.

At length he took both her hands and lifted them to his lips. "Do you know the one thing that has come to me out of it all?"

"Yes," she murmured. "I know."

"It came to me in the night, last night. Up to then it had seemed fate's whisper in that was driving me. But then, when I saw the gulf opening at my feet, and saw no way out, and ceased to struggle, I knew all at once that fate is only an empty name; that it was—God."

He felt her slender fingers quiver in his clasp.

"There was an Eye that watched and a Hand that overruled," he said slowly. "Even the evil and the hatred—the temptation, the sin and the pain—the penalty—It overruled all. Drink made the man who shot Craig a criminal, yet but for that burglary you might now be Craig's wife! Drink sent me to his house that night, yet but for that journey I could not have saved you. Drink opened the prison door to me, but only there—I know it now!—could I have mastered it! And if I have won in this campaign and if I sit—with you, my darling!—in the mansion on the hill, it is because of what I learned within those walls—the knowledge of what drink has done to men!"

He released her hands and looked up into the heavens.

"It shall vanish from this State," he said. "And it shall vanish from this Union! I am as sure of it as if the sign of its passing were written there in the sky!"

She caught his arm. "See!" she said.

Far away, city-ward, over the trees, against the deep, dark vault, the dazzling many-pointed star of a rocket paled and sank into the darkness.

T H E E N D

Business is Business



ELEANOR DUFFIELD was alone in New York. She was a slender, graceful being, with fine features and so much golden-brown hair that she had difficulty in confining it to a definite scheme. At twenty she was receiving a salary of fourteen dollars a week from Braunlieb's department-store, which speaks well of her mental equipment. Most of the girls there drew from six to eight.

There was a man in her life. He lived at her boarding-house and was supposed to be a broker, although he frequently stayed at home all day and had a bad look and an insatiable appetite for water in the mornings. In reality, he was a smooth-spoken, audacious Broadwayite—a promoter of prize-fights, six-day bicycle-races and the like. Frequent contact with men of good family who possessed sporting tendencies had given him a thin polish, easily detected by discerning people but not by a girl like Eleanor. His name was George Tener, and she liked him. He often entered the store for a brief chat, and the time was not far off when she would consent to go out to dinner with him.

Eleanor's innate sense of right and wrong had thus far held back her consent to such a line of conduct. She seemed to distrust the man almost as much as she would willingly trust old Mr. Truax, who, with his wife, frequently came into Braunlieb's and bought things from her. She knew without being told that Mr. and Mrs. Truax

were of the elect. And she considered George Tener a man of wide experience, very entertaining and quite nice. However, she knew that those three people were not of the same quality.

George Tener was beginning to press his dinner-invitations upon Eleanor with much persistence just at the time when Mr. and Mrs. Truax were seriously considering an important matter. They were childless and lived in an apartment that cost ten thousand dollars a year. Old age and loneliness were making of that apartment a place of gloom. The elderly people wanted some bright young person around, and their acquaintance with Eleanor had brought them to the conclusion that she was a very desirable girl.

"But," argued Mrs. Truax, "she has spirit. She would never consent to accepting our hospitality without giving some return. And she would never be a paid companion."

"Why not adopt her?" suggested Truax. "We could do that and omit our legacies to the Riverside Hospital and all the rest of it. That girl might as well have the money."

"I know young women," asserted Mrs. Truax. "She is not the sort to accept what is practically charity. She has spirit enough to support herself, and she comes of good, sturdy stock. I think that she once lived in the Middle West and associated with nice people. Her talk and actions show it."

"Maybe we can find a way out," said the old gentleman hopefully. "That



By Charles
R. Barnes

ILLUSTRATED BY
RAY ROHN

young lawyer I recently discovered, Harrison Moyne, is a regular mine of ideas. I'll ask him."

"Do it," commanded Mrs. Truax.

THEREFORE, the following day, the old gentleman presented himself at the offices of an alert young attorney, who was quick and forceful and clean-looking. The two men had a long conversation, at the end of which Moyne agreed to look into the situation. He sent a communication to Eleanor by messenger, telling her that he was an attorney and that an affair concerning her had come to his attention. An interview was requested. The girl replied, asking him to call the following evening at her boarding-house. The establishment, she was careful to say, was equipped with a parlor in which young women might receive callers.

Attorney Moyne kept the appointment. When he saw the dainty, unworldly young woman, his heart sank. Here, he thought, was a wonderfully beautiful, confiding creature, whom he would not, for worlds, deceive. Yet he was commissioned by one of his best clients; and a young lawyer is sometimes long in learning that there is a straightforward manner of conducting legal affairs which turns out best in the end. Moyne began: "There are some people in New York who may be related to you."

"I have no relatives here. I am alone in the world."

"One never can be sure."

"But I am. My father and mother are both dead."

"Where did you live before coming here?"

"Cincinnati."

"And you have no relatives?"

"I am an only child. There never were many uncles or aunts or cousins."

Moyne smiled.

"We're all related, if we trace our families back far enough."

"Well, I suppose Adam and Eve were relations. But I'm pretty sure they passed away a long time ago."

"Can't you recall any more recent relatives?"

"No."

"This may seem like cross-questioning, but it is important. It may work out very well for you. What was your father's name?"

"Frank B. Duffield. He was a physician, and we lived in Clifton. I lost my mother seven years ago, and two years ago Father died. I was left alone with only a little money. That is why I came to New York. I've succeeded in making a living here, and I think I shall continue to get along."

"You'll do more than get along," Moyne assured her. "I have a client who is trying to locate a girl of your name and description. He has seen you and talked to you. I shall take the information you have given me and attempt to establish a relationship. My client and his wife are very wealthy people, and if you belong in the family, they want

you to live with them. Would you object?"

Eleanor was silent for a moment. When she spoke, there was doubt in her tone.

"The situation is quite impossible. I have no relatives. If there had been any, I should have heard of them long ago. I think your client has made a mistake."

"Perhaps," assented Moyne, "but an investigation can do no harm. I'll set about it at once." He rose to go.

"Your work will be perfectly useless," the girl said.

"Stranger situations have developed," he assured her. "Not long ago a friend of mine had a legacy from an uncle in Ireland. He got two hundred dollars, five pigs and a potato-patch. He'd never even heard of that uncle."

Eleanor smiled.

"You are setting out on a wild-geese chase," she told him. He went toward the door.

"We'll see."

HE left, and she went back to the parlor to think it over. While she was there, George Tener entered, and she told him of the lawyer's visit. It seemed to interest him intensely.

"Let's go to a movie," he said after a while. "It's only a little after nine."

"I've told you so often that I don't care to go unless there are other people with us."

"Chaperons!" he sneered.

"Yes. A girl ought to insist upon that, especially in a city like this."

"Don't you trust me?"

"That's not the question. I intend to act just as I would if I were living at home and had a mother to consult."

"But"—his voice went low—"I wouldn't let anything harm you. I love you too much. I'd do anything for you, if you'd only let me."

Eleanor arose and looked at him coolly.

"I think I shall go to my room now. You never talked to me like that. I always considered you as a friend—a comrade. I don't understand why you should so suddenly try to make love to me." She went to the door. He followed.

"Don't you see," he said in a quick, nervous voice, "that maybe you'll leave here and I won't get a chance to see you any more?"

"You are very much changed to-night," Eleanor told him. "Good night." She mounted the stairway and left him in the parlor, where he paced up and down for a long time. The girl, as an heiress, was well worth marrying.

Alone in her room, Eleanor sank into a chair, quite overcome by the events of the evening. The possibilities of a new and different life appalled her. The man she had met appealed to her. Tener had shocked her and aroused her suspicions. Her relations with him had always been cordial, and yet she had never even thought of love. Their association had been of the sort that exists between a boy and a girl. Now he had shown an unpleasant side of himself. As soon as he had discovered that she might be an heiress, he had told her that he loved her. This aroused in her such deep contempt that she put the man out of her mind.

Her opinion of Moyne was something she could not understand. He attracted her. There was an unmistakable personality about him that affected her. He was tall and slender, with twinkling blue eyes and a clean-cut look that inspired confidence. He had made a deeper impression on Eleanor in a half-hour chat than had Tener during an acquaintance of a year. This mystified her and sent her mind along a career of analysis that proved quite futile. In the end, she told herself that there were two men. One was nice and one was not.

Moyne's message to her loomed big at first; then it sank into the background. She was perfectly sure that she was not a relative of any rich or influential people. She knew all about her family. There had been Uncle Joe and Aunt Frances and some other aunts and uncles and cousins. They, however, were accounted for. Her business training had taught her that things seldom dropped out of clear skies. She had learned to be practical. Her fourteen dollars a week clothed, fed and housed her, and caused a small savings-account to grow slowly. In her trunk were reminders of a professional man's bad investments. She

had certificates for one hundred shares of stock in the Whirlex Metallic Packing Company. The concern was still in existence, but it had never paid the dividends so confidently expected by her father. And there was no chance that it would, because the output was so expensive to manufacture that other firms got almost all of the trade.

Eleanor was in a position to know this, for the reason that she had more than once looked into the business with the aid of attorneys and had found that the Whirlex Metallic Packing Company existed for the sole purpose of paying salaries to a few officers.

However, as the days passed, the prospect of becoming an heiress bobbed up pleasantly now and then to Eleanor. Moyne called on her again, ostensibly to obtain more of her family history. But before he did so he had a talk with old Mr. Truax.

"I'll handle this case," he said, "but not as you want it handled. Of course, it would be easy for me to manufacture papers which would convince the girl that you and Mrs. Truax are distant relatives. But I shall not do that."

"Tut-tut," objected the old gentleman. "Why quibble over technicalities when the end means great benefit to the young lady? By the way, what are the facts in the case?"

"Her father was a physician, well to do. My Cincinnati correspondent writes me that he was a man who invested in wild-cat schemes and left practically nothing at his death."

"Mrs. Truax," said the old man, "was born in Louisville, which is not far from Cincinnati."

"I shall work on the theory that there really exists a relationship between you and Miss Duffield," asserted Moyne. "If I can establish it, well and good. But if I can't, I do not intend to be a trickster lawyer and deceive that girl. I've had opportunities to be crooked, Mr. Truax, and if I had given in, I'd be better off in my bank-account than I am now. But I have made up my mind to be straight. I'll take up that Louisville clue."

"Mrs. Truax's maiden name was Ida Patterson."

"That is valuable information."

"But why be so strict? It is not as if we wished to harm the girl. We desire to give her a home and social life such as she should have."

"If I fail, you can find plenty of lawyers who will convince Miss Duffield that you are a great uncle."

"My boy," said Truax, "you won't fail. Something is coming out of this."

"I hope so."

MOYNE called at the boarding-house several evenings after this conference. Eleanor was frankly glad to see him. He at once got down to business.

"Have you any papers that might throw some light on this subject?"

"I have a bundle of papers," she replied, "but they don't make me out an heiress."

"I wonder if I might look at them."

"Surely." She left the room and returned with some documents which she unhesitatingly handed to Moyne. She readily responded to the honesty in his eyes; and the wholesomeness of him told her that she could trust him with anything. He glanced at the marriage-certificate of her father and mother, at some agreements of a commercial nature, at some letters. Then he came to the stock-certificates. One of these he copied, while the girl laughed.

"They aren't worth anything," she said.

"The names may lead to something," he retorted.

"But I'm not related to a brass-foundry."

Moyne took in the slender figure, the fine features and the abundance of golden-brown hair.

"Almost any sculptor would give his life to have you cast in one."

That was the first departure from purely business conversation. Eleanor frowned—then smiled.

"You meant that well," she said, "so I'm not offended."

"Why should you be offended if a man thinks you're a splendid girl and says so?"

"Men don't mean things like that when they're talking to a girl."

"I do; and you're contradictory: you said I meant it well."

"Perhaps I am more accustomed to talking business than what we are getting into."

"So am I. But I intend to digress every now and then. You inspire it."

"I think it would be just as well to play this lost-child game. Sometimes I am really interested."

Moyne laughed.

"Very well," he said. "I'll go, then. I promised to see my client this evening if I could get away from here before it is too late." He arose. The girl followed him to the door and into the hall. As they stood there talking, Tener came down the stairs dressed for the street. He saw the lawyer and the girl, and scowling, he slipped into the parlor. It was his intention to wait until the other man had gone and then have a talk with Eleanor. On the marble-topped parlor table he saw the papers and the stock-certificates. The certificates seemed to interest him very much. Evidently there was a deal on, involving money.

When Eleanor reëntered the parlor, Tener was walking the floor.

"I meant what I said the other night," he abruptly began. "If you'll have me, I'll marry you to-morrow."

"We can never be anything but speaking acquaintances," she told him as she picked up her papers.

"Money makes a difference," he said with a curl of his lip.

"With you—yes," she answered. Then she left him.

He went out into the street and saw Moyne a block away, getting into a taxicab. Hailing another, he followed the attorney to the Truax home. Immediately he came to the conclusion that a great deal of money was involved.

MOYNE was quite unprepared for the reception that awaited him. Mrs. Truax was in a state of high enthusiasm.

"Always trust a woman's intuition!" she exclaimed. "I felt that the girl belonged here, and now I am sure of it."

"You have news?"

"Not exactly. But we have this to go on—it is a family skeleton, but I feel that it fits into this affair: You see, a cousin of mine whose name was Duffman

became estranged from his family because he married the girl of his choice. He left Louisville and was so imbibed toward his father that he changed his name. A long time afterwards we learned that he was a practicing physician in Cincinnati, but of course, as we



When Eleanor reëntered the parlor, Tener was walking the floor.

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did not know his name, we could not look him up. That girl surely is my cousin's daughter!"

"Not so fast—not so fast," interposed Truax. "Of course, the story sounds plausible, but we have no proof."

"There is no better proof than a woman's intuition. Blood will tell. What other excuse can you give for my interest in a shopgirl?"

"We shall investigate this, of course," said Moyne. "In the meantime, I have learned something that might interest you. Miss Duffield has one hundred shares in the Whirlex Metallic Packing Company. Here is a memorandum of a certificate with the names of the officials issuing it." He gave the paper to Truax. "This company manufactures a metal packing for piston-rods of engines, but it pays no dividends. It's one of those concerns that pay salaries to officials and manage to get together a payroll every two weeks. I understand that the cost of production is so high that other makers of piston-rod packing get most of the business. The stock-certificates were among Miss Duffield's father's papers."

"I know of many companies like that," said Truax. "Let me see the names."

He closely scrutinized the paper Moyne had given him; then he tossed it aside.

"Never heard of those fellows," he declared. "I think they must be some easy-going men with not much business ability."

"They're perhaps not worth looking up," suggested Moyne.

"I'll think it over," said Truax.

The attorney made ready to leave.

"I'll wire my Cincinnati correspondent to go into Dr. Duffield's life thoroughly. There may be something in what Mrs. Truax says."

"Of course there is!" exclaimed that lady. "I am so sure of it that I am quite anxious to see her to-night and invite her to live here."

"Not so fast—not so fast," cautioned Truax.

Moyne smiled.

"If a man may be permitted a flash of intuition," he said, "mine would tell me that something surely will come of this."

He bowed his way out and took a taxicab to the nearest telegraph-office. There he dispatched the following message to the Cincinnati law-firm with which he was in communication.

Please look up details of the life of Dr. Frank B. Duffield. Was his name originally Duffman and did he come from Louisville? Immediate action important.

This telegram had scarcely been written when Tener entered the office, accompanied by another man. He gazed questioningly at Moyne and then proceeded to write a dispatch. During the writing, the other man constantly advised him. At length he produced this:

James McGill,
Norton's Hotel,

Cincinnati, Ohio:

Find out all about the Whirlex Metallic Packing Company. Who runs it? What is stock worth? Can you connect F. P. Truax, New York capitalist, or Harrison Moyne with it? Also Eleanor Duffield?

TENER.

Leaving the office, Tener and the strange man walked the entire distance to the boarding-house, Tener's companion talking much all the way. When they parted, they seemed to have formulated a plan, for they appeared calm and quite at ease.

IN the morning Tener followed Eleanor out of the house.

"Will you talk to me on business?" he inquired.

"I'm so disappointed in you that I'd rather not talk."

"But this may mean a nice little sum of money to you. To be frank, I saw your stock-certificates last night."

"You had no right—"

"It was accidental. You see, I went into the parlor, and they were on the table. I didn't know what they were. I thought all those papers were just dumped there by somebody."

"Well, what about them?"

"Will you consider selling that stock?"

"It isn't worth anything."

"Perhaps not—to you."

"But that company doesn't pay any dividends. It simply provides a salary list for some humdrum old men."

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"Of course the stock isn't worth a cent. But it would be worth a little to anyone who wanted to get into the company for some reason. Would you take ten per cent of its value?"

Eleanor looked at him in surprise.

"That would be a thousand dollars," she said. "I have a hundred shares, and they are supposed to represent ten thousand dollars. But what would anyone want with them?"

Tener waited a moment before replying. This girl was a keen business person, and it would not do to arouse her suspicions. At length he spoke guardedly.

"I have a friend who thinks he is an inventor. He is very wealthy and has been looking for a place where he can make a small investment and become an official. Then he wants to fit up a workshop. He has several brass contrivances which he thinks he can develop into something."

"But why doesn't he build his own shop and run it?"

"The idea is this," Tener slowly explained: "If my friend has his own shop, he won't have any market. You know enough about business to realize that an established business has channels through which it markets its goods. Sometimes years pass before a concern becomes profitable, merely on that account. My friend wants to get in with some factory that has a market. Then if his inventions prove of any account, he can send them out along with the specialty which the shop manufactures."

Eleanor considered. She did not trust this man; yet the prospect of banking a cool thousand was alluring. Tener went on:

"Of course, I am not making you an offer. I'd like to have an option on your stock, though. Then if my friend decides to take up the proposition, we can close the deal. Suppose you give me a paper telling me that I can have your stock for a thousand dollars within thirty days. That would be an option."

"I'll think about it," replied the girl.

"It looks good to me," Tener said. "You see, as it is now, your stock is no good and never will be any good. You are holding on to a few pieces of worthless paper. If you sell, you will get one

thousand dollars. My friend will experiment in that factory and maybe he will develop something big. Then the shop will be on a paying basis. The stock you have would be worth a lot, maybe. But as things are, you might as well burn up those certificates."

"Couldn't I use my influence to get him in the factory and have the people build him a workshop?"

"He won't do anything like that. He wants an interest in the business."

"Very well, I'll consider what you have said. And now I must hurry to the store." She left him and descended into a subway entrance. When she reached the store, she asked for and obtained leave of absence for an hour. Then she sought Moynes in his office.

"I have come on a matter of business," she brusquely said. In five minutes she had stated it. Moynes was quick to advise her.

"When anyone goes gunning for worthless stock," he said, "there is usually a colored person in the woodpile. Keep your stock and in the meantime find out the name of this inventor and look him up. I'll do that for you."

"That is a good idea. Now, what is your fee for consultation?"

Moynes tapped the top of his desk with a forefinger, as if considering.

"Miss Duffield," he replied, "if I were to come to you and ask you the exact nature and value of a piece of cloth with which you might be familiar, how much would you charge me for your opinion?"

"I understand," she said quickly. "But this is business. You must make a charge for your advice."

"I won't," he abruptly told her.

"You must."

"There are some things in this world," he slowly said, "that I want. And more than that, I intend to have them. One of them is this: I find a great deal of pleasure in helping you. We have been thrown together in an unusual way, and I have enjoyed every minute of our acquaintance. At first you were merely a part of a case. But after I had talked with you a few times, you were a girl. Then you became a particularly fine girl—a girl whom I would like to know outside of business. I intend to make you



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Moyne leaped up the steps, three at a time. He found Eleanor clutching at the railing, while above her stood Tener, breathing heavily, a wicked scowl on his face. He cursed at Moyne. "On your way, you! This is none of your business."

my friend, whom I would advise legally as a sister. Is my attitude unwelcome?"

Eleanor appeared confused.

"I ought to pay you," she at length told him.

"But do you mean to regard me as only a lawyer?"

"It isn't that. You make me feel as if I had gone into a store to buy something and that the man wouldn't take any pay for it."

"My very close friend, who has an office in this building, is going to take his wife to see 'The White Brigade' tonight. He has invited me. Will you go with us?"

She smiled.

"You are a very clever person. You've cleared up things quite nicely. I shall be glad to go."

"I'm not just Lawyer Moyne?"

"No."

He smiled and said:

"Take my advice about the stock from your lawyer, and go to the theater with Harrison Moyne. Does that suit?"

ELEANOR nodded and took her departure. An hour later Moyne received the following telegram from his Cincinnati correspondent:

Dr. Duffield born here and considered expert surgeon but impractical. Family was prominent socially. No Duffman in family connection. Never lived in Louisville.

About the same time, Tener received a message from Cincinnati.

Three men own Packing Company. Stock no good. Duffield party's father was stockholder. My informant says there is nothing doing with any New York parties. He is close to Packing Company's president in several deals.

Moyne considered the message and Miss Duffield's information of enough importance to justify an immediate confab with Truax. Together they went over the situation, carefully considering every point. At length Truax exclaimed:

"I'm an old man, but there's still a little fighting-blood in me! My boy, I've fought the best of 'em down there in Wall Street, and I never lost. There is something behind this case, of which we

How I Raised My Earnings from \$30 to \$1000 a week

*The Story of a Young Man's
Remarkable Rise, as Told by Himself*

THREE years ago I was earning \$30 per week. With a wife and two children to support it was a constant struggle to make both ends meet. We saved very little, and that only by sacrificing things we really needed. To-day my earnings average a thousand dollars weekly. I own two automobiles. My children go to private schools. I have just purchased, for cash, a \$25,000 home. I go hunting, fishing, motoring, traveling, whenever I care to, and I do less work than ever before.

What I have done, anyone can do—for I am only an average man. I have never gone to college, my education is limited, and I am not "brilliant" by any means. I personally know at least a hundred men who are better business men than I, who are better educated, who are better informed on hundreds of subjects, and who have much better ideas than I ever had. Yet not one of them approaches my earnings. I mention this merely to show that earning capacity is not governed by the extent of a man's education and to convince my readers that there is only *one* reason for my success—a reason I will give herein.

One day, a few years ago, I began to "take stock" of myself. I found that, like most other men, I had energy, ambition, determination. Yet in spite of these assets, for some reason or other I drifted along without getting anywhere. My lack of education bothered me, and I had thought seriously of making further sacrifices in order to better equip myself to earn more. Then I read somewhere that but few *millionaires* ever went to college. Edison, Rockefeller, Hill, Schwab, Carnegie—not one of them had any more schooling than I had.

One day something happened that woke me up to what was wrong with me. It was necessary for me to make a decision on a matter which was of no great consequence. I knew in my heart what was the right thing to do, but something held me back. I said one thing, then another; I decided one way, then another. I couldn't for the life of me make the decision I knew was right.

I lay awake most of that night thinking about the matter—not because it was of any great importance in itself, but because I was beginning to discover myself. Along towards dawn I resolved to try an experiment. I decided to cultivate my will power, believing that if I did this I would not hesitate about making decisions—that when I had an idea I would have sufficient confidence in myself to put it "over"—that I would not be "afraid" of myself or of things or of others. I felt that if I could smash my ideas across I would soon make my presence felt. I knew that heretofore I had always begged for success—had always stood, hat in hand, depending on others to "give" me the things I desired. In short, I was controlled by the will of others. Henceforth, I determined to have a strong will of my own—to demand and command what I wanted.

But how shall I begin? What shall I do first? It was easy enough for me to determine to do things—I had "determined" many times before. But this was a question of will power, and I made up my mind that the first step was to muster up enough of my own will power to stick to and carry out my determination.

With this new purpose in mind I applied myself to finding out something more about will power. I was sure that other men must have studied the subject, and the result of their experience would doubtless be of great value to me in understanding the workings of my own will. So, with a directness of purpose that I had scarcely known before, I began my search.

The results at first were discouraging. While a good deal had been written about the memory and other faculties of the brain, I could find nothing that offered any help to me in acquiring the new power that I had hoped might be possible.

But a little later in my investigation I encountered the works of Prof. Frank Channing Haddock. To my amazement and delight I discovered that this eminent scientist, whose name ranks with James, Bergson and Royce, had just

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE THE GREAT SHOP WINDOW OF AMERICA

completed the most thorough and constructive study of will power ever made. I was astonished to read his statement, "The will is just as susceptible of development as the muscles of the body"! My question was answered! Eagerly I read further—how Dr. Haddock had devoted twenty years to this study—how he had so completely mastered it that he was actually able to set down the very exercises by which anyone could develop the will, making it a bigger, stronger force each day, simply through an easy, progressive course of Training.

It is almost needless to say that I at once began to practice the exercises formulated by Dr. Haddock. And I need not recount the extraordinary results that I obtained almost from the first day. I have already indicated the success that my developed power of will has made for me.

But it may be thought that my case is exceptional. Let me again assure you that I am but an average man, with no super-developed powers, save that of my will. And to further prove my contention, let me cite one or two instances I have since come across, which seem to show conclusively that an indomitable will can be developed by anyone.

One case that comes to my mind is that of a young man who worked in a big factory. He was bright and willing, but seemed to get nowhere. Finally he took up the study of will training, at the suggestion of Mr. W. M. Taylor, the famous efficiency expert of the Willys-Overland Company, and in less than a year his salary was increased 800%. Then there is the case of C. D. Van Vechten, General Agent of the Northwestern Life Insurance Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Just a short time after receiving the methods in will development suggested by Prof. Haddock, he felt that they would be worth from \$3,000 to \$30,000 to him.

Another man, Mr. H. D. Ferguson, residing in Hot Springs, Ark., increased his earnings from \$40 a week to \$90 a week in a remarkably short space of time after he began the study of will training. These are but a few—there are many other equally amazing examples which I personally know about. And aside from the financial gain, this training has enabled thousands to overcome drink and other vices almost overnight—has helped overcome sickness and nervousness,

has transformed unhappy, envious, discontented people into dominating personalities filled with the joy of living.

Prof. Haddock's lessons, rules and exercises in will training have recently been compiled and published in book form by the Pelton Publishing Co., of Meriden, Conn. Mr. Pelton has authorized me to say that any reader who cares to examine the book may do so without sending any money in advance. In other words, if after a week's reading you do not feel that this book is worth \$3, the sum asked, return it and you will owe nothing. When you receive your copy for examination I suggest that you first read the articles on: the law of great thinking; how to develop analytical power; how to perfectly concentrate on any subject; how to guard against errors in thought; how to drive from the mind unwelcome thoughts; how to develop fearlessness; how to use the mind in sickness; how to acquire a dominating personality.

Some few doubters will scoff at the idea of will power being the fountainhead of wealth, position and everything we are striving for, and some may say that no mere book can teach the development of the will. But the great mass of intelligent men and women will at least investigate for themselves by sending for the book at the publisher's risk. I am sure that any book that has done for me—and for thousands of others—what "Power of Will" has done—is well worth investigating. It is interesting to note that among the 150,000 owners who have read, used and praised "Power of Will," are such prominent men as Supreme Court Justice Parker; Wu Ting Fang, Ex-U. S. Chinese Ambassador; Lieut.-Gov. McKelvie, of Nebraska; Assistant Postmaster-General Britt; General Manager Christeson, of Wells-Fargo Express Co.; E. St. Elmo Lewis; Governor Arthur Capper, of Kansas, and thousands of others.

As a first step in will training, I would suggest immediate action in this matter before you. It is not even necessary to write a letter. Use the form below, if you prefer, addressing it to the Pelton Publishing Company, 31-H Wilcox Block, Meriden, Conn., and the book will come by return mail. This one act may mean the turning point of your life, as it has meant to me and to so many others.

PELTON PUBLISHING COMPANY

31-H Wilcox Block, Meriden, Conn.

I will examine a copy of "Power of Will" at your risk. I agree to remit \$3 or remail the book in 5 days.

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are unaware. That girl may be no relative of ours, but she is not where she ought to be. I intend to look into this thing. My wife won't be satisfied with the telegram you got. And she's become so attached to the girl that she'll raise Cain if anything happens to her—if there should be any value to that stock and somebody should get hold of it."

"I'll give all my time to the case," offered Moyne.

"You'll watch this end," commanded Truax. He took up the telegram and marched out of the place. And that evening he was on a train bound for Cincinnati.

An all-night railway journey is something to fag a strong, hearty man at least to the point of peevishness. Old man Truax, however, stepped from the train at Cincinnati as bright and alert as a trained-to-the-minute boxer. Two hours after his arrival he was inspecting the plant of the Whirlex Metallic Packing Company. He found fine, modern buildings equipped with expensive machinery. Truax was convinced, before he had progressed very far, that slovenly business-methods were responsible for the lack of success which had followed the efforts of the Messrs. Baldwin, Gruber and Sloane, the salary-drawing officials in control. His request for a conference was immediately granted. Leaning back comfortably in a leather-cushioned director's-chair, he began:

"You are equipped to manufacture almost anything in this plant?"

"Yes."

"Then I have a proposal to make. American factories are turning out war-contracts at big prices. They are neglecting the domestic trade."

"That's true," admitted Baldwin.

"Then why not go after some of the home business?"

"We get all we can," said Sloane.

"But you make only one article. Make other things. Sidetrack your packing and make the articles needed by the country—steel products. We'll change the factory around a bit, get a barrel of orders and make a lot of money."

"We?" queried Baldwin.

"I mean that. I'll put a hundred thousand into your business. We'll fig-

ure on possible products, and I'll show you where to get orders. I have in mind now the needs of the automobile industry. What do you say?"

Messrs. Baldwin, Gruber and Sloane looked at one another amazed. Here was a noted New York financier fixing up what was to them a gigantic deal in a few sentences. They were aware that he knew what he was talking about, that his influence practically insured the success of the venture. For a space there was silence. At length Sloane spoke up, futilely trying to repress an excited tremor in his voice.

"As far as I am concerned, you can come in."

Baldwin and Gruber immediately gave their approval to the idea.

"Then," said Truax, "we are agreed."

He spent some little time with his new partners, discussing the business. Then he left them, located some of Mr. Duffield's former acquaintances to establish the facts set forth in the telegram to Moyne, and by evening was ready for the return-journey to New York. The following afternoon he looked in upon the young lawyer.

"That girl doesn't belong in a store," he declared. "Her position in Cincinnati was of the best. Her Packing stock will soon be paying well; we'll make a million-dollar company and issue the stock as dividends. She will be well to do, then. See if you can get her to dine with us this evening."

AS soon as the old gentleman had gone, Moyne went to Braunlieb's store and found Eleanor.

"You and I are invited to dine with a Mr. and Mrs. Truax," he told her. "You may have read the society columns."

She flushed.

"Don't all girls?"

"Then the name isn't exactly strange, is it? There is a matter of business to be discussed. Your stock is good, and Truax had a lot to do with making it good. You'll come?"

"Yes."

"I'll call for you. There isn't time to tell you everything here, but I may as well warn you to prepare for luck." He

smiled mysteriously and vanished, leaving her to count the minutes until her curiosity could be appeased. That evening he told her as much of the situation as he knew, while they were on their way to the Truax home. There they were very graciously received by the elderly people. At dinner the old gentleman told of the change he had brought about in the Whirllex Company.

"You didn't do all that for me!" the girl exclaimed.

"Well," he answered, "Mrs. Truax and I were interested. Aside from that, I have always believed in turning a penny wherever possible."

"Yes," put in Mrs. Truax, "and what have we to show for it? An empty home."

"You are lonely?" asked Eleanor gently.

"Exactly," said the old man. "We are so lonely that we want some one to live with us, some companionable person—"

"Yes," interrupted his wife, "that is what we need. Wouldn't you consider—" She paused as the softness went out of Eleanor's expression. Her intuition assured her that the girl would accept nothing that savored of patronage. Mr. Truax hurriedly intervened:

"Business is business," he chuckled. He continued:

"The Whirllex Company will have a New York office to care for the Eastern trade." He turned to Moyne. "The appointment of legal adviser is open."

"I accept," Moyne grinned. There was something cut-and-dried about this.

"Good. Now, Miss Duffield, will you resign your place at the store and identify yourself with the Whirllex Company?"

"Of course I will!"

"You shall be my personal aid in a social capacity." Truax looked at his wife. "Remember the old days when you used to give dinners and theater-parties for a lot of impossible people, whose acquaintance had to be cultivated for business reasons?"

Mrs. Truax smiled.

"On the surface they were purely social," she said. "Behind the scenes we were frankly commercial. I'm too old for that now."

"Why," exclaimed Eleanor, "I used to help Father that way!"

"You'll do it for me?" Truax spoke almost sharply.

"Certainly."

"Then it's settled. You will be in our house as our little guest; you'll be one of the family."

Eleanor stared with such a perplexed expression that Moyne laughed outright.

"Caught!" he cried.

"But—"

"The deal is closed," observed Truax.

"You accepted my proposition."

Moyne laughed again.

"This," he remarked, "is better than vaudeville."

"I walked into a trap," Eleanor complained.

Mrs. Truax arose and went to her.

"My dear," she said in a very motherly voice, "we want you. The arrangements are such that you can do honorable work for your living in our home. You are one of us, from now on."

THE girl's mind was so befuddled by the quick and unexpected happenings that the rest of her evening at the Truax home was passed in more or less of a daze. She insisted upon walking home, when she found herself, at half after ten, in the street with Moyne. Neither spoke much on the way.

In the vestibule of the boarding-house Moyne and the girl almost stumbled over two suit-cases.

"Some one must be going away," commented Eleanor. "Wont you come in and visit with me a few minutes?"

Moyne followed her into the parlor, which was lighted by a well-turned-down gas-jet. The place was in the disorder attendant upon an evening of use by many people with many reasons for having been there. A forgotten sewing-kit was on a chair; a boarder's hat was perched on the piano; some books and evening newspapers lay on the center-table. Eleanor frowned at the mussiness. She turned up the light.

"Look at a paper while I leave my things in my room," she said, "and don't be too observing. I'll be right down."

Moyne settled himself in a chair and took up a paper. The girl mounted the



The Last 24 Minutes of Ignorance

By RICHARD S. CHILDS

THEY got Scribner out of bed by 'phone at 1:07 A.M. When he arrived at the plant the fire was on three floors of the old building, the shed was already gone, and the Chief had sent in a second alarm.

Fred was already there, and had picked up some men on the street to help him save the patterns in the pattern shop. Two loaded cars stood on the siding ready to go out, but they were too near the burning shed to be moved.

The new building had not yet caught—there was a chance it might be saved yet.

The crowd parted as he approached.

They let him through the fire-line to go into the office and open the safe to get the books. He stuffed his pockets full of bulky papers; then there was nothing to do but stand and watch the firemen trying to save the new building.

He was knocked out of business for months. He realized that most of his customers would cancel their orders and develop cordial relations with his competitors. A reporter touched him on the elbow.

"Oh, yes," said Scribner. "Loss fully covered by insurance."

But in his heart of hearts he knew it was not true. He looked through the papers in

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE THE GREAT SHOP WINDOW OF AMERICA

his pockets and found his blanket-insurance policy.

Scribner got a new light on his insurance policy that night.

By the light of the blaze, he tried to read the fine print. When he obtained the full amount of his insurance he would have scarcely enough to restore the buildings and the machinery. He would be in luck if he could get the machinery in less than eight months.

Part of the payroll would have to go on, and the salesmen would have to spend their time in jollying the customers along. No dividends this year! He would be lucky if he could keep alive his credit. His going business had come to a complete halt. Fire insurance had nothing to compensate for that.

As he watched, the flames began to lap at the new building.

"Oh! You can save that, can't you?" he cried in desperation to the Chief who stood near. "You know, it's fireproof."

The Chief smiled. "Sure, it's fireproof; so is a stove. But the stuff inside will burn fine."

"I've been nervous about this place for years," continued the Chief.

"Why?" asked Scribner, with challenge in his tone. "Is it any worse than Smith & Gaylord's, or Jackson's?"

"Sure it is," said the Chief, earnestly. "They've got sprinklers over there. We were called to Jackson's only last week. They had a nasty little fire in a chute. The sprinkler put it out before we got there. The watchman called us as soon as he heard the bell ring, just as a precaution, but there was nothing to do when we got there."

"I had fire buckets and stand-pipes," said Scribner, "but I didn't feel that I could afford a big sprinkler system."

"Guess you didn't look them up very hard. Jackson's sprinklers didn't cost him anything. His insurance rate went down

eighty per cent. when he put in the sprinklers and saved him \$1,000 a year."

"It would have been worth \$50,000 to me if I had known that before," replied Scribner, looking at his watch. It was just 1:31 A.M. In 24 minutes he had mastered the whole subject: he saw that fire insurance alone would not fully protect a going business.

When Scribner got his temporary office established the next week in what remained of the new building, he wrote us a letter. He didn't say anything about the fire. He told us how much insurance he had carried and what it cost him per year, and he enclosed a rough diagram of his plant as it was before the fire. Our rough calculation showed him that he had a property suitable for a Grinnell Automatic Sprinkler System.

He signed a contract later for Grinnell Sprinklers throughout the new plant.

"Now that you have signed the contract," said our representative, "how did our prices compare with the other fellow's?"

"You were about three per cent. higher," he answered, "but I will buy a sprinkler system only once. If I get the wrong one the expense of changing would be enormous, and I know that yours is standard. Grinnell's protect more property than all the other kinds put together, so there can't be anything very far wrong with it. The others may be just as good, but I haven't time to learn the sprinkler business—I do know I am safe with Grinnell's."

Now, Mr. Reader, is your name Scribner? Are you, too, unaware that you can easily have Grinnell Sprinklers? Send for a copy of the Grinnell Exemption Blank and when you fill that out for us, we can tell you approximately how much sprinklers will save you in cash each year.

Don't theorize! Get the figures. Write—now—to the General Fire Extinguisher Company, 273 West Exchange Street, Providence, R. I.



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stairs and went to her door. Down the hall a light came through a transom. In that room Tener was pacing up and down. A telegram was outspread on his dresser. It read:

Truax was here and bought heavily into Whirlex. Factory will be reorganized and product increased. Stock will jump as soon as news gets out. Looks like big thing. May be sensation.



"Perhaps," ventured Moyné, "perhaps the Cline lady might change her civil action to a criminal charge. Right?"

Tener heard Eleanor's door open and close. Immediately he caught up a light topcoat from where it lay on the bed and clapped on his hat. He softly turned the knob of his door and slipped out into the hall. Tiptoeing to Eleanor's room, he knocked. She came to the door.

"I've been waiting all evening for you," he began. She passed through the doorway and out into the hall, smiling as she turned her key in the lock. Tener, she was sure, was sorry for their misunderstanding and wanted to patch up the situation.

"I can't talk to you now," she hastily said. "I am expected downstairs."

"Those certificates," stubbornly insisted Tener. "What about them?"

Eleanor's face went hard. So it was a mere matter of money, after all! She tried to pass him, but he stood in her way, blocking it but moving backward before her as she pushed toward the head of the stairway.

"I'll give you three thousand for them."

"They're not for sale."

"In cash—now!" Tener brought forth a big roll of currency, liberally streaked with yellow. Eleanor's quick glance caught the figures "100" on several crisp notes as the man fingered them.

"I won't sell."

"Four thousand." She turned her face away and slid along until her hand caught the stair rail. Down three steps she slipped. Tener's hand came heavily upon her shoulder.

"Stop!" he growled. "I want that stock. It is no good to you. I want it. I'll give you five thousand for it, here and now. I've got to have it. Give it to me!" The girl looked up into his face and shivered at the expression she saw there. Greed, cruelty, cupidity, shone in the countenance and leered out of the eyes. She recoiled. Tener's hand gripped into her shoulder until he hurt her. A half-stifed scream escaped her. And at the sound of her voice Moyné rushed out of the parlor

and stood in the center of the downstairs hallway, looking anxiously upward.

"What is it?" he called.

"George Tener," she said calmly, "let me go!" Moynes leaped up the steps, three at a time. He found Eleanor clutching at the railing, while above her stood Tener, breathing heavily, a wicked scowl on his face. He cursed at Moynes.

"On your way, you! This is none of your business."

Moynes fixed his eyes on Eleanor.

"Is it my affair?" he asked. Before she could answer, Tener cut in:

"Nice little game you're playing," he sneered.

"You might be more explicit," suggested Moynes. The girl started down the stairs, and he moved with her. Tener followed menacingly.

"She"—indicating Eleanor—"has been fooled into believing in you. She's let you in on that stock deal."

"As her lawyer—yes."

Tener scoffed.

"You're a perfectly straight lot, you lawyers. Nobody ever heard of a lawyer's getting a woman's confidence and then taking everything away from her. You're a fine lot!"

They had reached the lower hall. Moynes faced the angered speaker.

"I heard you called George Tener just now," he said, smiling.

"That's my name."

The attorney stepped into the parlor, took up the paper he had been reading, and returning to the hall, opened it.

"I've heard of you, Mr. Tener—along Broadway." A wide grin was glowing in Moynes's face. "They call you a promoter, I believe."

"That's me," barked Tener defiantly.

"I am pleased," the lawyer resumed, "to have you with us this evening. You and I, Tener, know who and what George Tener is. The third member of this little party does not, I take it. Don't you think she ought to know?"



Without a word he opened the door and went out. Before closing it, he turned and said: "You were right about the suit-cases. They're mine. I'm going to-night and maybe you can guess the reason."

The promoter glared at his questioner; then his eyes went to the newspaper. He twisted his face into a snarling grin. Turning to Eleanor, he said in a voice that had in it a suggestion of desperation:

"I claim the right to buy your stock. I was after it before this man butted in. Here's the money. Give it to me!"

Moynes regarded him in amazement.

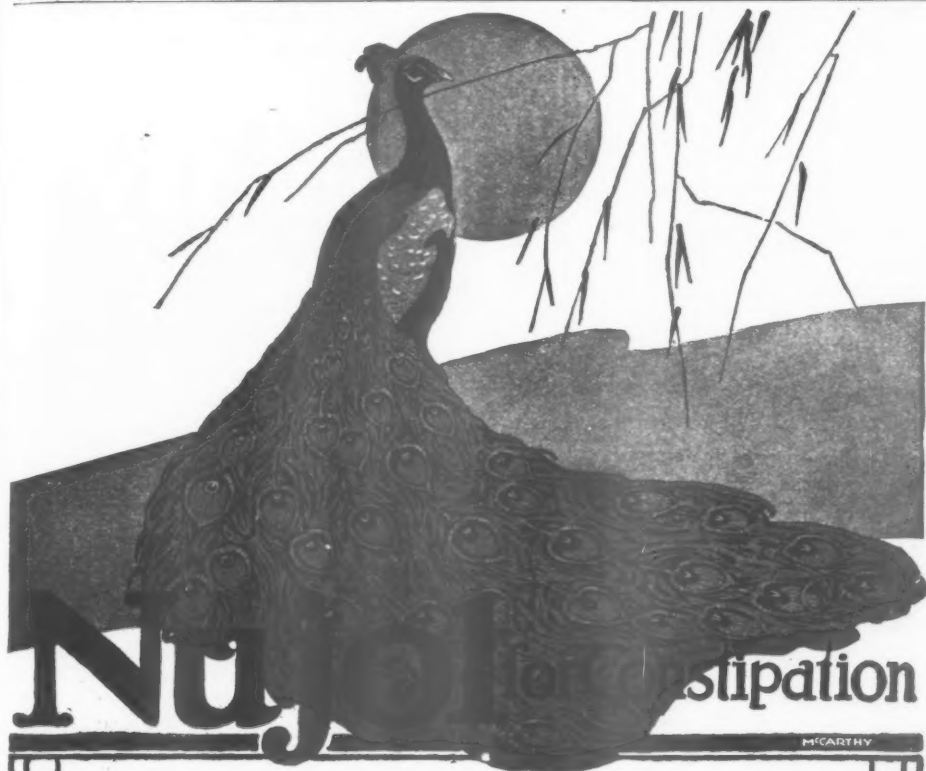
"You're wonderful!" he at length exclaimed. "Fighting in the last ditch, by Jove! Tener, I'll bet anything you say that those grips in the entry belong to you." He held up the paper. "Listen, people, while I read this gentleman's adieu. Listen!" He picked out a block of type on the printed page and read:

"Promoter George Tener, who pulled off the fake fight between Battling Ryan and Kid Stahl, last month, is again in trouble. Mrs. Mary Cline, a young and reputed rich widow of Brooklyn, has filed suit against him to recover two hundred dollars. She alleges she gave him that sum to bet on a visionary prize-fighter, in a bout that never took place and was never meant to take place. He told her, she avers, that the fighter lost. This is the second time that Tener has faced a similar charge. The first complainant was a telephone girl who gave him all of her savings."

Moynes finished and paused. Tener's eyes roved from him to Eleanor. Then he gave a short laugh and strode to the door. Without a word he opened it and went out. Before closing it, he turned and said:

"You were right about the suit-cases. They're mine. I'm going to-night and maybe you can guess the reason."

"Perhaps," ventured Moynes, grinning, "perhaps the Cline lady might change her civil action to a criminal charge. Right?"



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"Quite," affably agreed Tener. "Good night." His eyes went from the awe-stricken girl to the contemptuously smiling lawyer, and a flash of venom lighted them. "I leave you, feller, with the Million-dollar Kid. Trim her, old top—trim her good and plenty. You've beat me to it!" He slammed the door and was gone. A flare of rage overcame Moynes. His hands gripped to hard, fists and he flew at the door.

"Don't, please!"

Eleanor's voice rang out in quick, commanding appeal.

"Don't," she repeated. "It isn't worth while."

Moynes paused and faced her.

"I mean it," she went on rapidly. "He was merely trying to hurt you with me—and you are taking him seriously."

Moynes was breathing heavily, his hands clenching and unclenching.

"I won't have my motives—"

Eleanor went close and impulsively caught his shoulders. The tenseness of the situation had swept her out of her poise. Her actions and words were intuitive; a woman's instincts swayed her. And as the man stared at her, the anger-emotion that moved him melted and gradually fused with the softer yet none the less potent vibrations emanating from the intense girl-personality so dangerously close. It was a moment in which almost anything might happen. Moynes swayed slightly forward as Eleanor's voice, suppressed almost to a whisper, came to him.

"What he said was nothing but bosh. I couldn't think anything like that about you!" She caught back her words, then let them come in careless abandon. "I respect you, I trust you, I—like—you." Her eyes left his, and a flame of red swept into her face. It burned into the very soul of the man. He gasped. Then with a sudden, cave-man lunge, he caught her in his fiercely strong arms. A

torrent of alternately rushing, stammering words raged through her dizzy brain. She did not realize what he said; she knew precisely what he meant. Her arms went slowly to his neck and encircled it.

"I know—I know!" she whispered. Then she sobbed, just because she was glad. The gas-jet in the parlor sputtered, for there was water in the pipes. Outside, the night traffic rumbled. A dozen blocks uptown, old man Truax

continued to demonstrate to his wife that business is business. Such things are of the world and are commonplace. But the world's greatest and oldest commonplace—a man feverishly trying to convince a girl, who is already convinced, that he loves her—was being staged as drama in the boarding-house hallway. Moynes and the girl did not know this. He said presently:

"I can't believe it. I'm afraid I'll wake up."

Eleanor spoke dreamily.

"It's almost too wonderful to be true," she admitted.

NEXT MONTH

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The best installment of
"We Can't Have Everything!"
by Rupert Hughes

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by Albert Payson Terhune
and several others

The Fee

Wherein Rose Gillespie attempts to marry a man who is dead—a story vividly dramatic and refreshingly unusual.

By John Barton Oxford

WHEN the last of the yellow, honeycombed ice is swirling down the Passebessic River, and the first venturesome song-sparrows are warbling behind stone walls, Hodge Marrs invariably invests fifteen cents in a bottle of gilt paint and uses it to freshen up the three signs that decorate the shingles at the right of the front door.

There are three of these signs. The first reads:

E. H. MARRS
Conveyancer

Hodge gives this one the barest touch of artistic attention. He hasn't filled in a deed or made out a mortgage for years. The second, with the legend,

HODGDON MARRS
Insurance

suffers a similar neglect. Hodge underwrote his last insurance somewhere back in the late nineties.

But the third sign gets practically the whole fifteen cents' worth of glittering gilt paint. This last sign, the important one of the three, announces to the world at large:

E. HODGDON MARRS
Justice of the Peace

There was method in Marrs' madness of lavishing fifteen cents' worth of gilt paint yearly upon that third sign by his front door. In his mind's eye, he could see them beginning to come, now the weather was turning warm and the song-sparrows were beginning to chirp. He could see them coming down the road, over the bridge, across the fields, even—some of them; in limousines, in sporty road-cars, in side-bar buggies, in rattling farm wagons, or afoot; lean couples, fat couples, giggling couples, staid

couples; some of them so young he knew well enough they were lying about their ages, some of them far enough past the first flush of youth to have known better, some in silks and some in calico. It was all one to Hodge, so long as they handed over the five dollars he charged them for the ceremony.

APRIL had come again. The justice-of-the-peace sign had just received its annual refurbishing. Hodge, in his shirtsleeves—for the evening was unusually balmy—sat on the stone doorstep, carefully drying and shaping the camel's-hair brush.

All at once Hodge ceased pinching the brush and sat up, his head cocked on one side. He fancied he heard the sound of a motor somewhere across the bridge. Hodge's ears were always alert for any such sound in any such direction. The bulk of his motor-riding clients came across that bridge. He strained his watery eyes through the gathering dusk. Presently he could just make out a faint but darker shadow moving across the black line which was the bridge. He waited only to see it reach his own side of the river and swing into the little sloping road that led to his door, before he scrambled up and dived headlong into the house.

A moment later Hodge Marrs popped out again, for all the world like some gaunt-visaged jack-in-the-box. He was buttoning a rusty frock coat, braided as to its edges and of obsolete cut, about his thin frame. Thus habited in the outward garb of his office, he strode unhurriedly and with a certain odd mixture of eagerness and dignity to the gate. A limousine, an expensive limousine, was coming to a stop just beyond the sagging fence.

The door of the limousine opened—with a bang as if whoever was about to

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE THE GREAT SHOP WINDOW OF AMERICA

"Hello Huck!"



RECALL that golden day when you first read "Huck Finn"? How your mother said, "For goodness sake, stop laughing aloud over that book. You sound so silly." But you couldn't stop laughing.

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alight was in a hurry. A man jumped briskly from the black interior of the car. He was a tall man, a thin man, a man of about Hodge Marrs' own age. He did not seem, however, the sort of man who would be riding in expensive limousines. His overcoat was distinctly shabby; his trousers were baggy, his shoes patched. The black string-tie under the turn-down collar—a collar of the "reversible" paper variety—had become untied, and its ends flapped about in the wisp of evening breeze. A pair of cold eyes bored through the darkness at Hodge, who had just flung open the gate with a bow at once stately and inviting.

"Are you Hodgdon Marrs?" the newcomer shot out. "The man that marries people—runaway couples?"

Hodge inclined his head yet a third time.

"If the lady will alight, and you will bring her in—" he began insinuatingly.

"Huh? The lady?" The man beside the car sniffed, grunted and grinned all in one swift muscular movement. "There isn't any lady—not now there isn't. The lady in the case will be here later."

He turned to the man at the wheel of the car—the unsmiling, statuesque young man in faultless livery.

"Go up to the Glen Falls Inn, Ed," he instructed. "Stay there till I 'phone."

The car purred, backed, turned down the slope.

"Now then," said the man to Hodge. "If you'll step inside," Hodge suggested.

THE man followed Hodge up the path. he waited just inside the door, while Hodge fumbled for a match, in a room beyond, found it and struck a light. It disclosed a low-ceiled room, lined with antiquated lawbooks, and furnished with a roll-top desk, a low center-table, and a soapstone stove.

"You said the lady would be here a little later?" Hodge began, straightening up from the lamp he had just lighted.

His visitor was glancing at his watch.

"Almost any minute now," said he.

"If you haven't yet secured the licenses—" Hodge began, moving suggestively toward the roll-top desk.

"It's not me, you idiot," snapped the man just inside the door. "What's the price of these marriages here? What do you get for 'em?"

"Five dollars is the fee," said Hodge, with as much dignity as a man who has just been bawled out for an idiot can summon.

"Five dollars, hey?"

The man's hand went inside his vest. Out came a red leather wallet. It was a worn old wallet. It had evidently seen much service. It was jerked open. Hodge Marrs' eyes bulged at the contents. The man impatiently jerked out a yellow-backed bill.

"Well, here's fifty. It's a fee from me—a retainer from me, if you'd rather put it that way—not to marry a couple that will be here inside the next half-hour."

"Not to marry them!" Hodge repeated blankly even as his hand went out for the alluring yellow-back.

"Listen closely to me and get it straight," said the other. "There isn't much time, I imagine. My name's Douglas Gillespie. Ever hear of me?"

Hodge leaned forward to peer at the other man in surprise. Douglas Gillespie was a name to conjure with in that State. Somewhere to the north Douglas Gillespie owned acres of timber land and countless sawmills and a whole town. Yet this tall, thin, shabby man claimed to be Douglas Gillespie!

"Certainly I know of you, Mr. Gillespie," said he, his mind reverting to the limousine and the liveried chauffeur thereof.

"Good!" said Gillespie. "Then listen! Here's the lay of it. The girl that's coming here to-night—the girl you're not to marry—is my daughter Rose. Eighteen! Little fool! Don't know her own mind. Fell in love, or thought she did, with a young chap that's trying to run an independent lumber-business north of my holdings. Name's Ellis Thorne. He's a fool too. Wrecked himself trying to buck me. Hasn't got a cent to his name. Some misguided fools are backing him. Can't find out who they are.

"Rose thinks she's in love with him. Thought I'd broken it up. Three days ago I found out they'd hatched it up to

skip off here to you to-night. Eight, I believe the hour was. Shut her up, I did, then. I know the man she'll marry. Saw she didn't get any word to him. My idea was to let him come here and meet me here instead of her. Early this afternoon there was an accident at his mill. Boiler went off. Running it too hard, they were. Only got one onery little mill in the whole outfit. Three men killed. Lot more caught in the wreck of the place. Thorne goes in after 'em. Bing—another explosion, and all off with Thorne. At least, that's the report that came down to us. So I took down the bars. If he's gone what's the use of watching the girl. Tough on her anyway. That's the way I looked at it then. Tough on her, but she'd get over it presently—they do when they're eighteen.

"But listen here! What happens? At five o'clock she goes down to the station. She buys a ticket. For where? For here. See? He aint dead. She's got word somehow he aint dead and they're trying to pull one off on me. See? He aint dead, and somehow she's got word of it. That's why she's stopped her hysterical screeching all at once and made tracks for here.

"But she'll have to change at Still River Junction and wait an hour and a half for a train. So here I am ahead of 'em. You conceal me somewhere, and when they come, show 'em in and act just as if you was going to marry 'em. Get it? Then I'll come out of my hiding. Leave the rest to me."

Hodge folded the bill and tucked it into a pocket. He nodded understandingly as he did so.

"Just bring them in here and let you surprise them. I see," said he.

His watery eyes roved about the room. They fell on the dingy portières at the door just beyond the desk. He grinned.

"I'll put you behind those curtains," said Hodge.

Gillespie walked over and whisked them aside. Hodge toddled after him with a chair.

"The very place," said Gillespie. "Bring 'em in and start in on the ceremony just as if I wa'n't here. Got it, aint you?"

"Just as usual—as if I hadn't seen

you to-night," Hodge repeated with a smile.

He dropped the curtains. He turned about, fingering the fifty-dollar bill in his pocket. He was reaching for one of the cob pipes on the soapstone stove when the rusty hinges of the front gate creaked. Some one tapped on the door.

HODGE opened the door. Even in the feeble glow of lamplight he saw the girl on the doorstep was very young and very pretty and very much distressed. Her hat—a jaunty little hat—had slipped askew. Her low shoes and her silk stockings were caked heavily with the claylike mud of the April roadways. Her eyes were red and swollen with much recent weeping. Her lips quivered as she spoke. She was quite alone.

"This is Mr. Marrs' place?" she asked.

"I am Mr. Marrs," said Hodge. "Will you step in? The gentleman is coming later?"

She did not reply, but with lowered head followed Hodge into the room with the sheepskin-bound books and the soapstone stove. She slipped into the first chair inside the door.

"I wish to be married. I have come to be married," she said in an odd, flat voice, as if she were droning some dull lesson it had been hard for her to learn.

"And the gentleman?" Hodge suggested.

"He is dead," she said, her head bowed lower yet.

"But I wish—I wish the ceremony to go on just the same," she said. "We—my father didn't approve of him, and so we were going to run away and be married here to-night—to-night at eight. That was the hour we had set. This afternoon there was an accident. He was killed. I am very tired. The train was late, and there wasn't any kind of a car or carriage to bring me here from the station. I had to plod through the mud. He is dead. But he is still mine, and I am still his. So I want the ceremony just the same—at eight—to-night. I will pay you the fee—any fee you ask me. His name was—his name is Ellis Thorne."

Hodge stood by the table, leaning heavily on one rigid arm. He was star-

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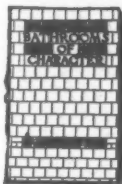
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ing at the girl, and in the watery eyes was a momentary gentleness, a hint of understanding and a great pity.

"Just a moment," he said uneasily, and made for the portières.

He found Gillespie huddled behind them, chin in palm, eyes downcast.

"What'll I do?" Hodge stooped to whisper hoarsely.

"Do?" Gillespie whispered back stupidly. "What'll you do? See here, anything—anything like that wouldn't be—be legal or binding, would it?"

Hodge shook his head.

"You can't marry people to the dead—not legally," he said.

Gillespie threw back his head. Hodge saw the underlip drawn in between the teeth.

"Give her what comfort you can," he urged. "It's little enough, God knows! Do as she says!"

Hodge slipped back to the front room again. The girl seemed aware neither of his going nor of his coming. She sat staring at one muddy little shoe.

Hodge picked up a worn old book with limp black covers from the desk. He had the odd and for him wholly unique sensation of cold chills chasing each other down the back of his neck. He said, throatily, huskily:

"If you'll stand, please—here, by the table!"

The girl arose. She stumbled to the place he had indicated and grasped the table-edge to steady herself. Her head was still bent. But she made no sound.

Hodge opened the book. Three times he cleared his throat before he could begin his own self-constructed marriage-ceremony.

"Matrimony is commended of Saint Paul to be honorable among all men. Therefore it is not to be entered into unadvisedly nor lightly, but discreetly, advisedly, soberly."

There was a bulging of the portières. They were parted slightly.

"Rose, do you take this man Ellis—"

There was the sudden cough and whir of a motor at the gate. Footsteps came along the path. A thunderous summons boomed through the little house.

Hodge scowled.

"Rose, do you take this man—"

The summons boomed again. Some one seemed trying to split the door-panels. Then the front door flew open, letting in a gust of wind that set the lamp to flaring. Two men came in, one of them white-faced and bandaged, leaning heavily on the other.

There was a sharp cry from the girl. She rushed forward. She fell upon the bandaged figure. She clung to it wildly.

"They told me you were dead, Ellis. They told me you were dead," she cried over and over.

There was a babel of voices immediately. All three were talking at once, the bandaged man, the man with him and the girl. Out of the hubbub the bandaged man's voice finally became audible.

"I came to on a train. Jim was rushing me to the nearest hospital. I remembered the date. It was all off then. I made them stop the train—it was an express, too—at the next station. We got a car and went back to you. But they told me you'd come here—so we came as fast as we could. They told me, too, your father had rushed down here. Where is he?"

"Father?" the girl asked.

"They said just after you left—"

There was the scraping of a chair and the rattle of metal rings as the portières were whisked aside. Douglas Gillespie stood beside the table, his cold eyes glowing at them.

Thorne tried to draw himself up. It was a sorry attempt. The man with him and the girl had to hold him erect, he was so weak. But in the ashen white of his face his eyes, narrowed, glowed defiantly at Gillespie.

"Well?" he demanded of Gillespie very calmly.

Gillespie stood staring back at the younger man with never a change of expression in those cold eyes of his. Then he turned to Hodge Marrs.

"What are you waiting for?" he barked at Hodge. "What's the use of all this delay, anyway? Here's two people waiting for you to marry them, and you stand there with your mouth open—you, the champion marrier of ten States. What are you hanging back for? You've got your fee, haven't you?"

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The Bird in the Bush, By Eugene Manlove Rhodes

A LONG SHORT STORY, COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

Continued from page 1067 of this issue

citing. Sometimes they brought Minnie's ma along for chaperon, sometimes not. It didn't make no difference. Them girls didn't need no chaperon—not much, anyway.

Did I say that the boys had quit visiting each other and made Shelter the reg'lar Sunday headquarters since the girls took to comin' out? Well, they did. It was bound to be that way. So I wasn't obliged to go huntin' with 'em any more. Somehow I wasn't near as glad as I might 'a' been. But I was the host, and also I wasn't much young any more. The play come for me to take a back seat.

MINNIE thought there wasn't no place like Shelter, and she kept coaxin' me to sell out to her father. "If you will, I'll get Poppa to let me homestead it," she says, "and I'll have it for my very own. Poppa has used his homestead right. I think you might, Andrew J."

This was about the thirteenth time she'd named it to me. "Why, yes, so I might, but then will I?" says I. "There aint another place just like this in the whole dinky world, I don't believe. I've done used my homestead right, too. Your little scheme would mean forfeiting my desert claim—and where would Aforesaid A. J. Bates be then, poor thing?"

"You might buy a place," says Minnie, pouting.

"I want to tell you, Miss Minnie," says I, "that there can't no man buy a place—not if it cost him a million dollars—and get so much solid comfort from it as he can where he was the very first man that ever nested there since the world began, and where he has cut every post and built in every stone and set out every tree with his own fair hands. So I go along with Shelter as an encumbrance. If you're dead set to

make your home here—take a chance! A bird in the bush is the noblest work of God," says I. "I'm old and I'm stove-up and I'm unlucky, but I'll do my da—I'll do my best to make it a safe shelter, Minnie," says I.

She flushed all rosy red, and she dropped her eyes, but she shook her head. "I can't," she whispers. "You'd make it a safe shelter, Andy, and maybe it would be better if I could. But I can't."

"Why?" says I. "Don't you like me at all, Minnie, not the least little bit?"

"Oh, I do!" says she. "I do like you, ever so much—but not that way."

"How do you know?" says I.

"I know!" says Minnie.

"Who is it, Minnie? Dee, I reckon?"

"Don't! You mustn't!" she says, catchin' her breath short. She let me see her face—my pretty! And there were tears in her eyes. I knowed when she let me see them tears that no matter how much she liked Dee, she might have liked me pretty well too, if the play had come different.

THEN she gave me a straight look.

"And you don't really want me, Andy—not really! Oh, you think you do—just now! But it's partly because you want to be neighborly, and maybe because you know that I don't have a very good time at home. And you'd always be good and kind to me, I guess. But after a while, you'd be sorry. For there's just two kinds of people in this world," says Minnie. "The kind that thinks a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush—and your kind, Mr. Aforesaid Andrew Jackson Bates! Wherever you are, the soil of that place will be burning your foot-soles. You'll always be wondering what is on the other side of the hill, and you'll always be wondering what is on the other side of the world, and wanting to go see; and you'll always be wearin' for the bird in the bush!"

"Well, then, don't you grieve your pretty head about me, honey," says I. "I'm old, and I'm tough, and I'll winter through some way. Maybe there's a good deal in what you say. But just you remember Shelter, if ever the world don't use you well. I'll be here, waiting."

"I'll remember," says Minnie. "But don't you put on such a long face. You can't fool me much, Andrew Jackson! You're one-half sorry and disappointed, and the other half is glad you've done your duty and no harm come of it. You'll be good as new in no time, and dreamin' about the bird in the bush. Good-by, and good luck!" she says, and turns her pony's head to town.

"You aint going to let this make no difference about comin' out, when you feel like it?" says I.

"Oh, no! I'll be out, same as usual—after a little." Her face was kind of smily and teary and cheery all at once, and part mischievous, and kind of poutish too. "I know you only want what's best for me," she threw back over her shoulder, "and that's why I know you don't really-truly like me—that way," she says. "If you did, you wouldn't know you was old or unlucky or anything—and you'd be insisting on havin' your own way, whether 'twas best for me or not!"

I spurred up, but she hit her pony a lick and held up her open hand. So I stopped. "It's too late to insist now, Andy J.—after what I just said," says Minnie, reinin' up. "You go on back to your dam-work that you're so all wrapped up in. And say, Andy—" Her pretty face was all mischief now.

"Orders!" says I, touching my hat.

"Don't let your kind heart coax you to ask Jane! If you do, Andrew Jackson, I sha'n't like it one little bit!" And she was gone.

I think of her a heap, sometimes. . . . Say, it's hell to be old! 'Specially when you're not really a little bit old, inside. I've had a lot of fun; sometimes I think I've had more fun than anyone. But I've missed a heap, too.

MINNIE come back, after a few weeks, but it wasn't ever quite the same. She kept Dee or Jane right with

her, and she didn't call me Andy J. any more. I was Mr. Bates. So I built dam.

We kep' things rockin' along as per usual, Eph and Estebán and me just a-humpin', and Eusebio trifling along, only a little above the average. Lordie, there's a heap of difference in men! My the'ry is that if a man don't earn more than you give him, no matter how much that is, he aint worth having around. Half the time Eusebio was plumb in our way.

Along late in September, when it was likely there wouldn't be any more rains, I saw a big storm coming up. "Maybe the last of the season," thinks I. So I called the boys out.

"Vacation!" says I. "We'll just fix our ditch to fill up this hole-in-the-ground and see if she'll hold. The teams is pretty well jaded out. Steve, you and 'Sebio take a week's lay-off—more, if you want it."

"You theenk thees tank not break, Meester Bates?" says Estebán.

"I hope not, Steve, old socks," says I. "For if she goes, we're sure a-going with it. It's no more than the square thing for us to put on our slickers and set on the dam—just as a bet that we been doin' good work."

Well, we done so, and she didn't break. My recipe for perpetratin' dams is to make 'em twice-and-a-half as strong and long and deep and wide and high as there is any use of, 'special the spill-way, and then to say a little prayer.

The sun come out warm and pleasant, and we all took a big swim. The Mexican men, they went to rustle their horses so's they could pull their freight after supper, and I set there on the dam, seein' things.

Next mornin' Eph and me slep' till the horses woke us up, beggin' for corn. Eph, he went off to pluck a venison, and I stayed in camp.

I reckon there was where I made a mistake—quittin' work sudden in the middle of the week. If it had been Sunday, now, and folks around, maybe things might 'a' come different. All of a sudden, I felt tired out and old and blue and bald and all-alonesome; and I couldn't get seein' things any more. I



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couldn't see myself makin' 'cequias and settin' out fruit-trees; I just knowed that soil wouldn't grow alfalfa; my cows would climb out over them pinnacles; I couldn't think of no decent brand for 'em, and I couldn't think of no name for my cussed lake; and as for rippin' that dam when the water got low, it made me fair sick to think of it.

No sir, all I could do was to study about how sad it would be if anything was to happen to Minnie's little boy-doll. I hadn't a thing against Dee, you understand—square and white a kid as ever rode leather. It just broke my heart to think of that hazardous occupation he was following, and nothing ever goin' wrong. He might fall off a horse, or down a shaft, or in my new lake: a steer might butt him, or somebody might shoot him. There was a new man, Petey Simmons, breakin' bronc's for the J. B.; six or seven feet high, no eyebrows or hair on his face, 'count of having had smallpox—mighty ugly man; I wondered if maybe Petey wouldn't do it. Then Dee might get snake-bit or quick consumption. Railroads, too, they was mighty dangerous. I did wish that railroad would hurry up and come.

BEFORE noon I'd about compromised by havin' Dee run off with Jane. But I see that wouldn't do.

"You're getting morbid, Andy," says I. "I know what's the matter with you. You want to take a little horse-ride."

So I caught up old Quaker and went for a *pasear*—not anywhere perticular, you know—just riding the curse off. I felt better right straight. Pretty soon I was singing about how once in the saddle I used to be a gay old bird.

About the middle of the evenin' I was 'way up on a pinnacle, when I saw some one chasing a bunch of cattle in the hills just under me. I took a small peep through my field-glasses.

It was old Squatty Robinson on a blue bronc. He caught a big yearlin' and tied it to a saplin'; then he took in after the bunch and fought 'em on up the draw. I knew what he was up to. He'd drive the mammy-cow off up in the hills three or four miles; then he'd hurry back and adopt that yearlin'.

Quaker was prancing; I began to feel frisky, like I was only a big grown-up boy. Quaker was a flighty, hoity-toity horse, anyway—no fit company for a serious-minded man.

"Andrew Jackson," says I, "this is plumb dishonest, and it ought to be discouraged. Be you goin' to allow such goin's-on, or be you not?"

I went down there. I set that calf loose, and I took the rope that was on her and flung it over a limb, so the noose hung down just about high enough to hang a short man, and I tied the other end around the tree-trunk. Squatty was a short man.

I knowed Squatty would be back soon to drive home his foundling. I hid out to watch him. Just as I got myself spotted, here come a bunch of wild mares up the cañon, forty or fifty, and went on up the way Squatty did. They was burnin' the breeze; and behind them, here comes Estebán and Eusebio. That was funny too, because they told me the night before they was goin' to Holbrook. I lay right still.

They come pretty near up to where I was. I had to pinch Quaker's nose to keep him from whinnin'. They turned out of the cañon opposite me and rode up the hill to a big slick piece of granite below a cliff. They climbed up that afoot, and they hid something in a hole under the cliff. Then they rode back down the cañon.

"I go look-see!" says I, soon as they was out of sight. When I come to the tracks, they was barefoot tracks; yet them horses was fresh shod only yesterday: curious thing! I took away the stones and felt in that hidey-hole. What do you think I found? Two slickers with eye-holes cut in the backs of 'em just below the collar! I tried again and fished out a package. It was little: it had the express-company's seal on it, broken; it had been tied up again. Inside was a bunch of yellow-backs. Them triffin' boys of mine had robbed the stage!

"I'm plumb surprised at Steve," I says. "This aint honest!" I counted the money. There was twenty-five bills, each for one hundred perfectly good dollars. "Sufferin' Moses!" says I. "I didn't

THE BIRD IN THE BUSH

think the stage carried as much as that, all told, in a year." I turned the package over. 'Twas addressed to *J. Briscoe, Central, Arizona.*

"Twenty-five hundred is a heap of cash for the Butterbowl," I thinks. I tucked it away in my shirt-bosom. "Whatever did J. B. want of that much in cold cash? And when did my enterprisin' young friends know so pat when to get busy? And I thought that triflin' Steve was a pretty good *hombre*, dern him. Say! By Jings, I bet that Candy girl of his has been snoopin' through the letters on Poppa Briscoe's desk—and that's how they knew when the money was comin'! They started up them mares to account for themselves if they run onto anybody—and so they didn't see Squatty's trail, or mine, 'cause the mares had done run over 'em. That part is nearly right. But what I don't see, is what J. B. wanted of all that wad."

I was that absorbed I didn't see that same bunch of mares skyhootin' back down the hill to my horse that I'd left with his bridle-reins dangling. But I was too late. That ornery Quaker up with his tail and threw in with 'em. They went on down to the plain—and I was afoot!

I WAS pretty sore. I judged Squatty had met them broom-tails and turned 'em as he was coming back. So I got behind a boulder and waited. I didn't want to walk home—not if I could get Squatty's horse.

Squatty come directly. He was real surprised at not finding no yearling, and he said so. When he got down to get his rope, I cut loose a few shots, puffin' up dust between him and his horse. Squatty, he went to the wild bunch.

I kept foggin' away till I saw him come out of the timber two or three hundred yards up and cross a little glade to the main woods. Then I knowed Squatty had gone to waterin' at night.

I climbed his blue bronc'. I turned across toward home, studyin' up something real severe to say to Steve. But I never got to Shelter. I looked up, and there was that same bunch of mares quartering along in front of me. Some one had headed 'em off again and turned

'em back. They was almost beat out; they was strung along like a snake, rockin' up and down, noses to the ground, like one of them dream-gallops we have, where we don't get any forwarder. Some of 'em could hardly navigate. That old gray fool of a Quaker was hanging on behind. I could see his saddle shine.

I made a circle and fell in beside, sorter headin' 'em toward the stage-road. I closed in, riding easy, took after old Quaker and hurled my twine. The loop drewed up pretty deep on Quaker's shoulders—and just then my blue stumbled, and down we went!

I kep' out from under, but my foot hung in the stirrup. The blue horse scrambled up before I could kick loose; I grabbed for my gun, but it was jarred out where we fell—and away we went, kicking and bucking and squealing, with Andrew J. Bates, Baron Shelter, Lord of the Lake, dragging by one hind leg, on his back or belly as the case might be, grubblin' up cactus and soapweed with himself.

One end of the rope bein' fast to my saddle-horn and the other end on Quaker's neck, Blue Beelzebub had to go round and round like a circus-horse doing tricks, hurdling mesquite bushes and the like.

As luck would have it, little Andrew was dragging on the inside. That was what saved him. When Beezy kicked, he missed my face more'n two inches. Old Quaker give a little, to keep from chokin', so the little geometrical design I was inscribing with my carcass was a free-hand spiral, like the writing-teacher used to show us to develop the whole-arm movement, only more so.

I kep' trying to climb up my leg far enough to grab that rope, but 'twas only as a matter of principle—I really didn't expect to do it. Then—*bang!* went a gun. Poor old Beelzebub come down on his side and lay there, with only his legs a-quivering.

I could 'a' had a real lovely time, just layin' still a week or two, but I judged it best not. I got my foot out pretty brisk and rolled over on my hands and knees. Beelzebub was shot right through the brain-pan. He was mighty dead.

I boosted myself up by the saddle-horn



Two Against Two Hundred

They were waiting for him to collapse, before they killed him. It was one of those little coral islands in the South Seas. He was alone with two hundred man-eating blacks. He had fought with their sickness, and his own for weeks. He had not slept, he had not eaten—he could barely breathe. He had tendered them in their misery—but they had no gratitude.

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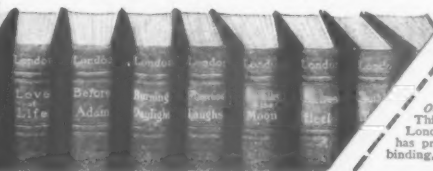
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and cantle and set down on the defunct: I poured the sand out o' my mouth and nose and ears and eyes, and looked round. I was considerable dizzy.

We was right beside the wagon-road: Beelzebub had stumbled, crossing it. Quaker had got some slack and was getting his breath—head hanging down, legs braced. Then I see a man. It was Petey Simmons, the J. B. bronco-buster. His mouth was open; his eyes was bug-gin' out, and he had a gun in his hand; he sat there on his horse looking at me, and he was whispering to himself. "Well, I'll be damned!" he says. "I will be damned!"

I looked at Petey a spell, and Petey looked at me. After a bit things steadied down some, and I remembers my manners. "Thank you!" says I.

"Oh, I *will* be damned!" whispers Petey again, as if his soul in them few words he would outpour.

I felt considerable nettled. It didn't seem to me that Petey was showin' the proper sort of spirit.

"Doubtless," says I. "But why so confidential about it? And what makes you think it's interesting to me? If you've fully made up your mind, all right—but I don't care, I'll tell you those!"

PETEY took off his hat. The sweat was starting on his face. He seemed stunned and grieved and discouraged; he hadn't the joyful look a man ought to wear that had just saved a valuable life. It didn't seem much of a compliment to me.

"Petey, that was a pretty fair shot you made," says I.

"Well, I will—" he began again, but I cut him off short at the pockets.

"Petey, I'll give you just one more chance," says I in a firm yet trembling voice. "You hunt around and pick up my gun and my hat and any pieces of my hide you think can be used again," says I. "And compose your mind good, for if you say any more about your future fate, I'm going to shoot you five times in the middle West. You plumb displease me. But first of all, you look in the road and see if there aint a lot of fresh tracks headin' for the Holbrook Gap."

He done so and nodded his head.

"I thought as much," says I. "Petey, some one robbed the stage out there this morning—two men named Doe and Roe. Central has done waked up and gone to see how about it."

"Hell's bells!" said Petey in a cracked and horrified voice. "Just the one time it's ever carried any money since Heck was a pup! Curse that black-hearted, liver-lipped, whip-sawin' old J. B., I believe he done it himself!"

"How'd you happen along so appropriate?" says I—wondering to myself how Petey knew there was any money on that stage.

"I been out to your place," says Petey, lickin' his dry lips. "You've gone; greasers gone; nigger gone. Comin' back, I see a saddled horse in a bunch of mares. I tried to cut him out, but they outrun me. So I shackled along on their trail, thinking maybe I'd aidge 'em along toward a corral and find some one to help pen 'em. Next I know, I saw a man clearin' off a place with himself for a three-ring circus. I tore off down here to keep him from being dragged to death—and it's *you*! Think of it!" says Petey, exceedin' bitter. "I run hellity-larrup through two miles of dog-holes, sixty miles an hour, hop, skip and jump, till each separate hair on my head stood up like feathers on the fretful concubine—and it's *you*! I'm ha'nted!" says Petey. "That's what it is—I'm ha'nted!"

Any way you look at it, Petey was showin' up mighty ungrateful. He stared at me some more and rode off, muttering, to look for my gun and things.

"Andrew Jackson!" thinks I to myself, "what call has this long, lean, lank son of Satan to show such deep and abiding chagrin because he has been the humble instrument, under Providence, for prolonging your days in the land? Why does he think J. B. had the stage robbed? If he did, wasn't it his own money? Who would J. B. be whipsawing by stealing his own money, and why should it stir up Petey's bile? But if so, why? What lot or part did Petey have in that lost and vanished wad?" Here I felt in my shirt-bosom for the money, thinkin' it might have got lost durin' the late exhibition, but it was still there.

"You can't deny it, Mister Bates—you've never been quite reconciled to J. B. sending for that amount of cash. Cash is for people that aint satisfied with checks. Who aint satisfied with checks? People that aint stayin' to have 'em cashed. Pretty big sum, aint it? About the price of what? Of erasing somebody? Who aint satisfied? Petey. How else could Petey earn that much so slick? Erasing who? Hey? Who's J. B. got it in for? Answer: Andrew Jackson Bates, of Naboth's vineyard.

"When did this money come? To-day, September 30th. When did Petey Simmons make his first and only visit to Shelter? To-day, September 30th. Was he displeased at the stage being robbed? He was. Why? Was he pleased at me not staying home? He was not. Why should a gentleman stay at home, if he didn't choose to wish to do so? Was Petey Simmons grateful to have saved a valued life? He was not. Last and most convincing of all, who was it you picked for to be poor Dee Macfarlane's murderer? Petey Simmons!

"Andrew Jackson, you ought to be thankful to J. Doe and R. Roe and Squatty. Only for their thoughtfulness there'd be a singin' soon at Shelter—and you'd be there, but you wouldn't hear it. Petey would just about have killed a J. B. beef beside your cold, unconscious lay, and said he caught you stealin' it. I wonder if Minnie would 'a' believed that?" thinks I.

Of course I didn't think it out in words, like that. I just thought it in thoughts, all at once and a good deal clearer. Words is mighty poor, slow tools, and they never did a good job in this world.

That wasn't all I sensed, either. There was impressions, little sidewise glances, things like this: Joe Only was boss; it was his to hire and fire. He didn't hire Petey; old Briscoe hired him. 'Twasn't usual, and 'twasn't liked. Nobody'd been real pleasant to Petey. The J. B. boys felt they was pretty adequate to break their own broncos.

All this grand and lofty thinkin' took place simultaneous like a sewing-bee. Petey brought me my things. I cleaned the sand out of my good old gun, shoved

her in the scabbard and give her a loving pat. Then I cocks one eye at my noble benefactor.

"Petey," says I, "not to be pryin' into your personal affairs, but was the old man to give you all that twenty-five hundred for expurgatin' me?"

Petey just stared at me, choking the horn of the saddle with both hands. I guess he felt that I was kinder vaccinated against him, after him savin' my life; he doesn't make any break for his gun.

"And you figure that he framed up a fake stage-robbin', to saw off the blame on you?" says I. "So you'd either get rubbed out or scared out?"

"Say, I hadn't thought of that!" says Petey, some startled. He give a pretty accurate description of the old man. He was a real powerful talker. "I'll go kill him right now—the old double-crossin' hypocrite!" he says, to wind up.

"Now, now, Petey!" says I, soothin' him. "You don't want to do nothing like that. People would talk. The old man has been dealin' 'em to you from the bottom, I can see that. But I wouldn't kill him, exactly. Say, Petey, if I show you how to get that twenty-five hundred to-night, honest and aboveboard, will you come to Squatty's place by sun-up and give me half?"

"Will I?" says Petey. "I'll give you all of it! But how? How? The money's gone."

"I don't know yet," says I. "You just keep your mind off your thoughts whilst I study a spell."

I unsaddled Quaker and felt in the saddle-bags to see if my field-glass was broke, and it wasn't.

"First off, Petey," says I, "them bold bandit-chasers are going to be back along here about sundown, aint they?"

He allowed they was, some of 'em, anyway.

"Bueno! Pues," says I, "they're going to see that dead horse, shot by a master hand. Everyone knows my saddle—and you're going to help me put it on the dead horse, right now."

HE done so. It was hard to make the change, but we rolled old Beelzebub into my saddle and cinched it on. Then I put the other outfit on Quaker.

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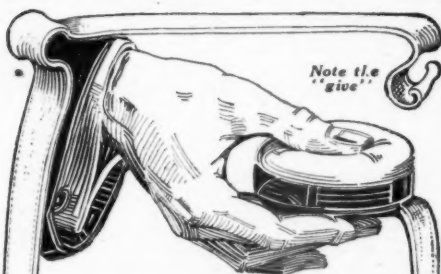
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"There!" says I, "What with that and the robbery and Squatty missing too, Central will be one wild and nervous uproar. And who so agitated as J. Briscoe? I grieve to think how scared that man will be!" said I. "Too scared to use any daylight judgment at all. So if you drop in and tell him you had the misfortune to kill me and would like to collect, I reckon he'd give you the wealth without asking for no receipt."

"How in blazes," said Petey, "is he going to give me any money, when the money's gone?"

"I meant, if they happen to find the money anywhere," says I. "If they don't get the money, you don't say anything to J. B. But I think maybe they'll find it. So you trot along and come out there to Squatty's soon as you can. Squatty, he aint there. We'll divide even—you for doing the bloody deed and me for concealin' the body," says I. "You tell the old man the play didn't come out just right, as there wasn't any beef-critter handy, and that you've hid out the corpse. Offer to lead him to me, if he holds back. But he wont. I've took a snubbing-postgraduate-course in psychology, Petey," says I, "and I tell you that J. Briscoe will be scared."

Petey took a long look at me. "I believe you are the devil!" he said. He was sweating again. "Lord, I'd like to! But I'll tell you honest, I lost my nerve when I found out whose life I'd saved. A man can't stand but just so much. Suppose the boys suspect me of killing you and find that money on me? They'll put me to bed with a shovel; they'll hang me and old man Briscoe with one rope."

"It aint likely," says I. "It seems a pity. But I can't take chances of losing my share of that money. I'll fix you out. Is Dee Macfarlane in town?"

Petey nodded, and I dug up my tally-book. I wrote a note to Dee, dating it September 30, six p. m., telling him not to be alarmed at any reports he might hear about me that night, that I was just having a little innocent relaxation after my arjous toils; and for him to tell Minnie—I wasn't going to have my pretty frightened—but on no account to tell anybody else except to save life. "Please return this note to bearer, who

doesn't want to be hung," I adds as a postscript. Petey read it; he grinned and started. He turned around and hollered back at me mighty earnest: "Don't you let anything happen to you, Andrew Jackson Bates!"

Me and Quaker terrapinned up the road a stretch, till I come to a rise that I could watch from a long ways off. Here I built up a little stone monument in the road and put that money on top, still in the original package, address-side up. I tacked off east two or three miles, to a bench where I could keep cases on that money with my field-glass.

AFTER a while the push fell off down the slope, six or eight of the boys loping along in front. I see them stop at my monument. Then I dug it up a draw for Squatty's. Got in about half-past dark, mighty tired. I drove up a bunch of Squatty's saddle-stock with me, and I caught his sorrel Gold Dollar horse. Then I turned Quaker loose with the bunch, opened up a lot of canned stuff and slept a few lines.

About sun-up Petey shook me. "Get up!" he says. "We got to get out of this!"

"Breakfast first," says I.

"Breakfast, nothing!" says Petey. "You come look at the Butterbowl!"

I took one look, and I see Petey was right. The sun was just peepin' over the hills, and the valley looked cool and pleasant. There was bunches of men scurryin' around everywhere, like drunk ants. I guess about the whole he-population was present. The nearest was eight or ten miles.

Some was following Petey's trail, some on mine, but most of 'em was spreadin' out for general results. They got 'em. Every mess of wild horses they scared up stampeded three more batches, and those bands scared more, and all of 'em stampeded every bunch of cattle they passed, and those cattle scared the next lot, and so on—and on—and on: just like politics. 'Twas a stirrin' scene.

My bosom swelled with pride. "Petey," says I, "did you get it?"

"That's what I went after," said Petey. "Here's yours. You keep the odd hundred."

"Let this be a lesson to you, Petey," says I, pretty severe.

"We'd better take to the hills," says Petey.

"We will not," said I, saddlin' the sorrel horse. "I always wished I was a musician, so I could fiddle at a fight. And this is the day when all my dreams come true. You and me, Petey, will go out on the flat." Then I stopped short and slapped my leg. "Chickens!" says I. "Chickens!"

"What's the matter with you now, you old hag?" said Petey, edgin' off.

"Chickens! I never once thought of keepin' chickens at Shelter till this very now! Come on, Petey," says I. "Let's us go play hare and hounds."

PETHEY came on, but he didn't like it.

"You red hellion," says that interesting beast, "I dassent leave you get an inch away from me till all the Butterbowl knows you're alive. Joe Only suspected me and J. B. right off. Otherwise I'd see you rot first. May my right hand cleave to the roof of my mouth if I don't think you're part fiend!"

We had to go a couple of miles toward the man-hunt to get down out of the hills. They seen us. Then we turned east across the big flat, heading for the big pass, where progress and the railroad was to come in—some time—and the Butterbowl fanned along after us. I reckon the cattle thought it was the Day of Judgment.

We let the boys gain on us, to encourage them—that is, I did. Petey, he was in favor of going on, but I held him back. "I never knowed how popular I was," said I. "Them boys are sure aimin' to avenge the deep damnation of my taking-off. And oh, Petey!" says I, "if you and me could only meet up with J. B. face to face, what a joyful reunion we would have!"

By the time we got in the foothills by the pass, they was pretty close—two of 'em 'way ahead of the others.

"That's Barefoot and Joe Only," says Petey. "They've got the best horses in the works."

And here I got my great surprise. We come out on a ridge above the wagon-road, and there I saw two numbers that

wasn't down on my program at all. Right below us, outward bound, was Minnie and Dee, joggin' happily along dead to the world. They'd just climbed out of the San Lucas where the wagon-road quit the Narrows, so missing the glorious and inspirin' panorama being presented on the flats.

I got the idee. Reasonin' from my note that I wasn't dead enough to grieve about, they was makin' the best possible use of the chance the excitement gave 'em.

If so, it was providential; for a little ahead, around a turn, I saw Parson Duffy coming in from St. Johns. I knew his white horses and his little old buckboard.

I called to them, and they jumped their horses apart like I'd thrown a bomb. Then they saw who it was, and they waited.

"Walkin' away to be married, children?" says I. Minnie drooped her head and blushed, and Dee looked foolish. And then I knew that old Andy Jackson was leaving Butterbowl. "'Cause, if you are," says I, "you'd better get to running."

I waved my hand down the pass. The hardy pursuers were just pouring into the scenery. One look was enough. The eloping party began hittin' the high places. There didn't seem to be any call to tell 'em that wasn't the angry father, but just a few friends desiring to lynch me for causing my own death.

"Easy!" I says. "You needn't ride so fast, for you wont have to ride far. You're both of age, and Parson Duffy is coming, Johnny-on-the-spot, up the road a stretch. If you'd like to be married while you are still in peaceful Butterbowl, Petey and I'll be witnesses, and you can be man and wife before you turn over the divide. Does it go?"

They said it went. We slowed down till we met the preacher. I did the explaining.

"Mr. Duffy," says I, "if you'll turn right around, we'd like to have you perform the marriage ceremony for this young couple, short but binding. You know them; they're of age and otherwise unmarried."

The Parson saw the avengers coming,

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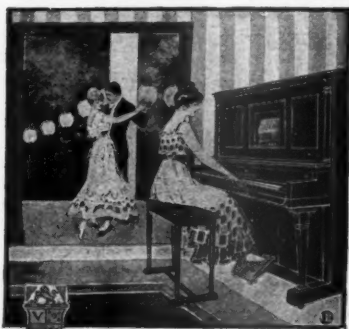
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and there's a twinkle in his eye. "You are in some haste, perhaps?" says he as he turns back.

"Oh, no hurry, no hurry at all; just lope right along," says I, as a couple of bullets whanged over our heads. Then we turned a curve out o' range. And by thunder, that old sport stood up in that rocking old buckboard and married them on the run!

I kissed the bride. "Be a good girl, honey," says I. "Lots of happiness to you both. I'm leaving here for keeps, and I'm giving Shelter to you two for a wedding-present—Mr. Duffy bein' witness. Good luck, Dee!" says I. "Be good to Deacon and Quaker—yes, and to Minnie too. Here's the summit. I'll stay here to check the maddened parent. No, there wont be any violence, Minnie. I'll give you my word. Just moral suasion. I got a heap of influence with the Butterbowl. Good-by!"

"Good-by!" said Dee, and "Good-by, Andy Jackson," said Minnie. "We'll not forget you. If you ever find the bird in the bush—or if you don't—come back to Shelter. It is always yours. We'll look for you. Good-by!"

WE waited, sky-lighted on the summit.

The pass opened up wide; across in the east it framed off a big country I'd never seen. Petey and I got off our horses and let 'em puff and blow; the parson fixed up his tally of the marriage for us to sign. I laid one of my blood-money bills in the buckboard seat, for his fee.

"I'm going to stay just long enough for Joe to see us together," Petey snapped at me. "Then you pick one side of the world, and I'll take the other."

"All right, Petey," says I. "I'll sorter fade away over into New Mexico. I aint never seen that country."

Then the committee of unsafety arrived. Joe Only set his horse up and looked at me a long time, real sad.

"What in the name of the seven deadly sins have you been up to?" says he. "I made sure Simmons had murdered you. Why didn't he?"

"It's a pretty note," I says to him, real peevish and bitter. "When a couple of white, male, free American citizens can't attend a wedding without such a hullabaloo as this!"

"Weddin'!" says Chuck. "Weddin'?"

"Sure—Miss Minnie Briscoe and Mr. Dee Macfarlane. Didn't you get an invite? Petey and I we rode over to be witnesses. Didn't we, Petey?"

"Don't ask *me*," said Petey. "I have went!" And he did so.

"But what—why—where's Squatty? Who robbed the stage? How'd that money get back?" says Joe.

Outraged citizens was a-burnin' around the bend. I wished I might have seen Poppa once more, but I see this was no place for Andrew J. Bates. "You go back, Joe," says I. "You go back and explain to 'em."

Joe Only was much of a man, but he let his voice go up to a screech. "Explain? Explain! What'll I tell 'em?"

"How should I know?" says I, giving him a little push. "Just explain!" And I came away.

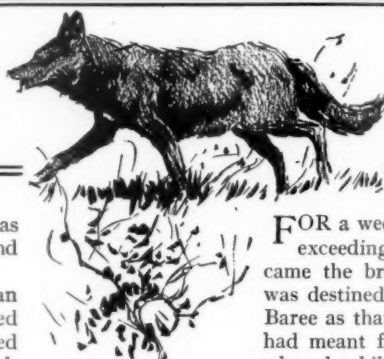
I'VE never been back. Dee and Minnie write to me sometimes. They're living at Shelter still; they say it's the best farm in Arizona. They want me to come back. Their oldest boy is tall as me—Andrew J. Macfarlane. He's going to Stanford next year. Briscoe's dead; the railroad hasn't come yet.

Some time, when I'm old, really old, and tired out, and lonesome—some time, I'm going back to Shelter.

THERE'LL be more stories by Eugene Manlove Rhodes in The Red Book Magazine as the months roll along—not many of them, for he doesn't write rapidly, but each one as perfect a gem as this.

A SON OF KAZAN

Continued from page 1164 of this issue.



By James
Oliver
Curwood

Wakayoo's coat was splendidly thick and black.

For a quarter of an hour Baree watched him while he knocked fish out of the pool.

When at last he stopped, there were twenty or thirty fish among the stones, some of them dead and others still flopping. From where he lay flattened out between two rocks, Baree could hear the crunching of flesh and bone as the bear devoured his dinner. It sounded good, and the fresh smell of fish filled him with a craving that had never been roused by crawfish or even partridge.

In spite of his fat and his size, Wakayoo was not a glutton, and after he had eaten his fourth fish he pawed all the others together in a pile, partly covered them by raking up sand and stones with his long claws, and finished his work of caching by breaking down a small balsam sapling so that the fish were entirely concealed. Then he lumbered slowly away in the direction of the rumbling waterfall.

Twenty seconds after the last of Wakayoo had disappeared in a turn of the creek, Baree was under the broken balsam. He dragged out a fish that was still alive. He ate the whole of it, and it was delicious.

Baree now found that Wakayoo had solved the food problem for him, and this day he did not return to the beaver pond, nor the next. The big bear was incessantly fishing up and down the creek, and day after day Baree continued his feasts. It was not difficult for him to find Wakayoo's caches. All he had to do was to follow along the shore of the stream, sniffing carefully. Some of the caches were getting old, and their perfume was anything but pleasant to Baree. These he avoided—but he never missed a meal or two out of a fresh one.

FOR a week life continued to be exceedingly pleasant. And then came the break—the change that was destined to mean as much for Baree as that other day, long ago, had meant for Kazan, his father, when he killed the man-brute in the edge of the wilderness.

This change came on the day when, in trotting around a great rock near the waterfall, Baree found himself face to face with Pierrot the hunter and Nepeese, the star-eyed girl who had shot him in the edge of the clearing.

It was Nepeese whom he saw first. If it had been Pierrot, he would have turned back quickly. But again the blood of his forbear was rousing strange tremblings within him. Was it like this that the first woman had looked to Kazan?

Baree stood still. Nepeese was not more than twenty feet from him. She sat on a rock, full in the early morning sun, and was brushing out her wonderful hair. Her lips parted. Her eyes shone in an instant like stars. One hand remained poised, weighted with the jet tresses. She recognized him. She saw the white star on his breast and the white tip on his ear, and under her breath she whispered "*Uchi moosis!*"—"The dog-pup!" It was the wild-dog she had shot—and thought had died!

The evening before, Pierrot and Nepeese had built a shelter of balsams behind the big rock, and on a small white plot of sand Pierrot was kneeling over a fire preparing breakfast while the Willow arranged her hair. He raised his head to speak to her, and saw Baree. In that instant the spell was broken. Baree saw the man-beast as he rose to his feet. Like a shot he was gone.

Scarcely swifter was he than Nepeese. "*Dépêchez vous, mon père!*" she cried. "It is the dog-pup! Quick—"

In the floating cloud of her hair she

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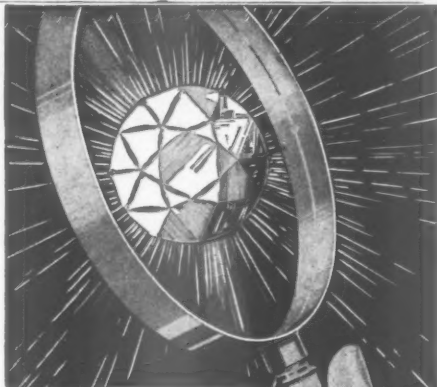
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sped after Baree like the wind. Pierrot followed, and in going he caught up his rifle. It was difficult for him to catch up with the Willow. She was like a wild spirit, her little moccasined feet scarcely touching the sand as she ran up the long bar. It was wonderful to see the lithe swiftness of her, and that wonderful hair streaming out in the sun. Even now, in this moment's excitement, it made Pierrot think of McTaggart, the Hudson's Bay Company's factor over at Lac Bain, and what he had said yesterday. Half the night Pierrot had lain awake, gritting his teeth at thought of it; and this morning, before Baree ran upon them, he had looked at Nepeese more closely than ever before in his life. She *was* beautiful. She was lovelier even than Wyola, her princess mother who was dead. That hair—which made men stare as if they could not believe! Those eyes—like pools filled with wonderful starlight! Her slimness, that was like a flower! And McTaggart had said—

Floating back to him there came an excited cry.

"Hurry, Nootawe! He has turned into the blind cañon. He cannot escape us now."

SHE was panting when he came up to her. The French blood in her glowed a vivid crimson in her cheeks and lips. Her white teeth gleamed like milk.

"In there!" And she pointed.

They went in.

Ahead of them Baree was running for his life. He sensed instinctively the fact that these wonderful two-legged beings he had looked upon were all-powerful. And they were after him! He could hear them. Nepeese was following almost as swiftly as he could run. Suddenly he turned into a cleft between two great rocks. Twenty feet in, his way was barred, and he ran back. When he darted out, straight up the cañon, Nepeese was not a dozen yards behind him, and he saw Pierrot almost at her side. The Willow gave a cry.

"*Mana—mana*—there he is!"

She caught her breath, and darted into a copse of young balsams where Baree had disappeared. Like a great entangling web her loose hair impeded her

in the brush, and with an encouraging cry to Pierrot she stopped to gather it over her shoulder as he ran past her. She lost only a moment or two, and was after him. Fifty yards ahead of her Pierrot gave a warning shout. Baree had turned. Almost in the same breath he was tearing over his back-trail, directly toward the Willow. He did not see her in time to stop or swerve aside, and Nepeese flung herself down in his path. For an instant or two they were together. Baree felt the smother of her hair, and he felt the clutch of her hands. Then Baree squirmed away and darted again toward the blind end of the cañon.

Nepeese sprang to her feet. She was panting—and laughing. Pierrot came back wildly, and the Willow pointed beyond him.

"I had him—and he didn't bite!" she said, breathing swiftly. She still pointed to the end of the cañon, and she said again: "I had him—and he didn't bite me, Nootawe!"

That was the wonder of it. She had been reckless—and Baree had not bitten her! It was then, with her eyes shining at Pierrot, and the smile fading slowly from her lips, that she spoke softly the word "*Baree*," which in her tongue meant "the wild dog"—a little brother of the wolf.

"Come," cried Pierrot, "or we will lose him!"

PIERROT was confident. The cañon had narrowed; Baree could not get past them unseen. Three minutes later Baree came to the blind end of the cañon—a wall of rock that rose straight up like the curve of a dish. Feasting on fish and long hours of sleep had fattened him, and he was half winded as he sought vainly for an exit. He was at the far end of the dishlike curve of rock, without a bush or a clump of grass to hide him, when Pierrot and Nepeese saw him again. Nepeese made straight toward him. Pierrot, foreseeing what Baree would do, hurried to the left, at right-angles to the end of the cañon.

In and out among the rocks Baree sought swiftly for a way of escape. In a moment more he had come to the "box," or cup of the cañon. This was a



He heard the crackling of hoofed feet and the smashing of heavy bodies in the underbrush. He heard again the mooring of the moose.

break in the wall, fifty or sixty feet wide, which opened into a natural prison about an acre in extent. It was a beautiful spot. On all sides but that leading into the coulee it was shut in by walls of rock. At the far end a waterfall broke down in a series of rippling cascades. The grass was thick underfoot and strewn with flowers. In this trap Pierrot had got more than one fine haunch of venison. From it there was no escape, except in the face of his rifle. He called to Nepeese as he saw Baree entering it, and together they climbed the slope.

Baree had almost reached the edge of the little prison-meadow when suddenly he stopped himself so quickly that he fell back on his haunches, and his heart jumped up into his throat.

Full in his path stood Wakayoo, the huge black bear!

FOR perhaps a half-minute Baree hesitated between the two perils. He heard the voices of Nepeese and Pierrot. He caught the rattle of stones under their feet. And he was filled with a great dread. Then he looked at Wakayoo. The big bear had not moved an inch. He too was listening. But to him there was a thing more disturbing than the sounds he heard. It was the scent which he caught in the air—the man-scent.

Baree, watching him, saw his head swing slowly, even as the footsteps of Nepeese and Pierrot became more and more distinct. It was the first time Baree had ever stood face to face with the big bear. He had watched him fish; he had fattened on Wakayoo's prowess; he had held him in splendid awe. Now there was something about the bear that took away his fear and gave him in its place

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Baree darted to one side and ran for the open meadow. Wakayoo did not stir as Baree sped past him—no more than if he had been a bird or a rabbit. Then came another breath of air, heavy with the scent of man. This, at last, put life into him. He turned and began lumbering after Baree into the meadow-trap. Baree, looking back, saw him coming—and thought it was pursuit. Nepeeese and Pierrot came over the slope, and at the same instant they saw both Wakayoo and Baree.

Where they entered into the grassy dip under the rock walls, Baree turned sharply to the right. Here was a great boulder, one end of it tilted up off the earth. It looked like a splendid hiding-place, and Baree crawled under it.

But Wakayoo kept straight ahead into the meadow.

FROM where he lay, Baree could see what happened. Scarcely had he crawled under the rock when Nepeeese and Pierrot appeared through the break in the dip, and stopped. The fact that they stopped thrilled Baree. They were afraid of Wakayoo! The big bear was two-thirds of the way across the meadow. The sun fell on him, so that his coat shone like black satin. Pierrot stared at him for a moment. Pierrot did not kill for the love of killing. Necessity made him a conservationist. But he saw that in spite of the lateness of the season, Wakayoo's coat was splendid—and he raised his rifle.

Baree saw this action. He saw, a moment later, something spit from the end of the gun, and then he heard that deafening crash that had come with his own hurt, when the Willow's bullet had burned through his flesh. He turned his

eyes swiftly to Wakayoo. The big bear had stumbled; he was on his knees; and then he struggled up and lumbered on.

The roar of the rifle came again, and a second time Wakayoo went down. Pierrot could not miss at that distance. Wakayoo made a splendid mark. It was slaughter; yet for Pierrot and Nepeeese it was business—the business of life.

Baree was shivering. It was more from excitement than fear, for he had lost his own fear in the tragedy of these moments. A low whine rose in his throat as he looked at Wakayoo, who had risen again and faced his enemies—his jaws gaping, his head swinging slowly, his legs weakening under him as the blood poured through his torn lungs. Baree whined—because Wakayoo had fished for him, because he had come to look on him as a friend and because he knew it was death that Wakayoo was facing now. There was a third shot—the last. Wakayoo sank down in his tracks. His big head dropped between his forepaws. A racking cough or two came to Baree. And then there was silence.

It was slaughter—but business.

A MINUTE later, standing over Wakayoo, Pierrot said to Nepeeese:

"*Mon Dieu*, but it is a fine skin, *Sakahet*! It is worth twenty dollars over at Lac Bain!"

He drew forth his knife and began whetting it on a stone which he carried in his pocket. In these minutes Baree might have crawled out from under his rock and escaped down the cañon; for a space he was forgotten. Then Nepeeese thought of him, and in that same strange, wondering voice she spoke again the word "*Baree*."

Pierrot, who was kneeling, looked up at her.

"*Oui, Sakahet*. He was born of the wild. And now he is gone—"

The Willow shook her head.

"*Non*, he is not gone," she said, and her dark eyes quested the sunlit meadow.

The next installment of "A Son of Kazan" will appear in the next—the May—issue of The Red Book Magazine, on sale April 23rd.

WE CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING

A NEW NOVEL BY RUPERT HUGHES

Continued from page 1092 of this issue.

Walsh. Register devotion, gratitude, adoration—now you got it. Turn on your lamps full power, dearie! Wow! Bully! A couple of tears, please. Clinch for the fade-out. Cut!”

Kedzie tiptoed away. She felt as Eve must have felt sneaking out of Eden and hearing the nightingales wrangling and the leopards at play.

CHAPTER XLI

GILFOYLE reached New York on the Twentieth Century. It was an hour late, and so the railroad company paid him a dollar. He wished it had been later. In his present plight, time was anything but money to him.

It took him some time to find the Hyperfilm Company's temporary studio. He learned of the fire, and his hope wavered. When he reached the studio, Kedzie was not there. The news of her resignation had percolated even to the door-man, who rarely knew anything from inside or outside the studio—an excellent non-conductor of information, he was. Gilfoyle had some difficulty in finding Kedzie's address, but at last he learned it, and he made haste to her apartment.

He was impressed by its gaudy vestibule. He told the hallboy that he wanted to see Miss Adair.

“Name, please?”

“Just say a gentleman to see her.”

“Gotta git the name, or I can't 'phone up. Miss Adair naturally wont see no gempman aint got a name.”

“Does she see many men?” Gilfoyle asked with sudden alarm.

“Oh, nossa. Mainly Mr. Dyckman. But that's her business.”

“What Dyckman is that, the rich Jim Dyckman?”

“Well, I aint s'posed to give out information.”

“Are you supposed to take in money?” Gilfoyle juggled with a half-dollar. The hallboy juggled his eyes in unison, and laughed yearningly:

“I reckon I might let you up by mistake. Does you know Miss Adair right well?”

“Very well—I'm a relative of hers by marriage. I want to surprise her.”

“Oh, well, you better go on up.”

Gilfoyle applied the magic silver wafer to the itching palm and stepped into the elevator when it came down.

KEDZIE was alone. She had sent her maid out to get some headache powders. She had had a good cry when she reached home. She had pondered her little brain into a kink, trying to figure out her campaign. When she had a headache, or a cold, or a sleepless night, or a lethargy, she always put a powder in her stomach. It never did any good, and she was always changing the nostrum, but she never changed the idea.

She felt ill and took off her street suit and her corsets, put on a soft, veilly thing and stretched out on her chaise longue.

She was coddling a photograph of Jim Dyckman. He had scrawled across it: “*To Little Anita from Big Jim.*” She kissed the picture and cherished it to her aching breast.

The door-bell rang. She supposed that as usual the maid had forgotten to take her key with her. She went into the hall in a rage, still holding the photograph. She flung the door open—and in walked Gilfoyle.

She fell back, stupefied. He grinned, and took her in with devouring eyes. If he had no right to devour her, who had? He approved of her with a rush of delight:

“Well, Anita, here I am. And how's the little wife?”

She could not answer him. He stared



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ferociously, and gasped as if he had forgotten it:

"Golly, but you're beautiful? Where's the little kiss?"

HE threw his arms about her, garnering in the full sheaf of her beauty. She tried to escape, to protest, but he smothered her with a kiss. She had been so long away from him, she had so long omitted him from her plans, that she felt a sense of outrage in his assault. Something virginal had resumed her heart, and his proprietorship revolted her.

Her shoulders were so constrained that she could not push free. She could only raise her right hand outside his left arm and reaching his face, thrust it away. Her nails were long and sharp. They tore deep gashes in his cheeks and across his nose.

He let her go with a yelp of pain and shame. His fists gathered; primeval instinct told him to smash the mask of pale hatred he saw before him. But he saw the photograph in her left hand. It had been bent double in the scuffle. He snatched at it and tore away the lower half. He read the inscription with disgust and growled:

"That's the reason you didn't write me! That's why you don't want to see me, eh? So he's keeping you! And that's why you resigned from the studio!"

The atrocity of this slander was too much. With a little catlike yowl she went for him, dropping the broken photograph and spreading all ten claws.

He caught her arms and held them apart where she could scratch nothing more than his wrists, which she did venomously. The cat tribe is a bad tribe to fight at close quarters. One must kill or break loose.

When Kedzie tried to bite him, Gilfoyle realized that she was in no mood for argument. He dragged her to the living-room door and then flung her as far as he could from him. She toppled over into a chair and began to cry.

It was not a pretty scene. Gilfoyle took out his handkerchief and pressed it to his face and the bridge of his nose. Then he looked at the red marks and held them out for her to observe:

"See what you did to me!"

"I'm glad of it," she snapped. "I wish I'd torn your eyes out."

This alone would not necessarily have proved that she did not love him devotedly, but in this case it corroborated a context of hatred. Gilfoyle felt rebuffed. There was a distinct lack of hospitality in her welcome. This reception was the very opposite of his imagined encounter.

He did what a man usually does, revealing a masculine inability to argue with a woman. He told her all her faults of omission and commission as if that would bring her to a reconciling humor. She listened awhile, and then answered with a perfect logic that baffled him:

"All you say only goes to show that you don't love me. You never did. You went away and left me. I might have starved, for all you cared. But I've worked like a dog, and now that I've had a little success, you come back and say: 'How's the little wife? Where's the little kiss?' Agh! And you dare to kiss me! And then you slander me. You don't give me credit for these plain little rooms that I rent with my own hard-earned money. You couldn't imagine me living in a place like this unless some man paid for it. Heaven knows I'd have lived with you long enough before I ever had a place as nice. Humph! Well, I guess so! Humph!"

GILFOYLE mopped his face again and looked at his handkerchief. One's own blood is very interesting.

The sight of his wounds did not touch Kedzie's heart. She could never feel sorry for anybody she was mad at.

Gilfoyle's wits were scattered. He mumbled futilely:

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it!"

"That's the way I feel about it!" Kedzie raged on. "I suppose you've had so many affairs of your own out there that you can't imagine anybody else being respectable, can you?"

Gilfoyle had not come East to publish his autobiography. He thought that a gesture of misunderstood despair would be the most effective evasion. So he made

it, and turned away. He put his handkerchief to his nose and looked at it. He turned back.

"Would you mind if I went into your bathroom to wash my face?"

"I certainly would. Where do you think you are? You get on out, before my maid comes back. I don't want her to think I receive men alone!"

Her heart was cold as a toad in her breast, and she loathed his presence. He repeated his excellent gesture of despair, sighed "All right" and left the room. The two pieces of Jim Dyckman's photograph were still on the floor of the hall. He stooped quickly and silently and picked them up as he went out. He closed the door with all the elegy one can put in a door with a snap-lock.

He was about to press the elevator-button, but he did not like to present himself gory to the elevator-boy. He walked down the marble and iron steps zigzagging around the elevator-shaft.

He paused on various landings to think and mop. He looked at the photograph of Dyckman, and his heart spoiled in him. He recalled his wife's anxiety lest her maid should find a man there. He recalled the hallboy's statement that Mr. Dyckman was often there. His wife was lying to him plainly.

He had known detectives and newspaper men and had heard them speak of what a friend they had in the usual hallboy. He thought that he had here the makings of a very pretty little bit of detectivity.

He reached the main floor and made a hasty crossing of the gaudy vestibule without stopping to speak to the hallboy. He had left his baggage at the station, expecting to send it to his wife's apartment when he found it. He had found it, but he could imagine what would happen to the baggage if he sent it there.

"All right!" he said to himself. "If it's war she wants, cry havoc and let slip the sleuth-hounds."

He went to a drug-store and had his wounds sterilized and plastered, saying that a pet cat had scratched him.

"Just so," said the drug-clerk with a grin. "Pet cats are very dangerous."

Gilfoyle wanted to slug him, but he

wanted his wounds dressed more. He walked and walked down the back avenues till he reached his old boarding-house district near Greenwich Village. He found a landlady who had trusted him often and been paid eventually. He gave his baggage checks to an expressman and went into retirement for meditation.

WHEN his suit-case arrived, he got out the poems he had been writing to Anita. He clenched them for destruction, but an exquisite line caught his eye. Why should his art suffer because of a woman's perfidy? He had intended to sonnetize Anita into perennality. She had played him false. Just for that he would leave her mortal. She should perish.

The poems would keep. He might find another and a worthier client for posterity. Or he might put an imaginary name there, as other poets had done. He wanted one that would slip into the poetry easily. He could use *Pepita* without deranging the rhyme.

He glared at the picture of Dyckman. He knew the face well. He had seen it in print numberless times. He had had the man pointed out to him at races and horse-shows and polo-games and bazaars.

He struck the photograph in the face, realizing that he could not have reached the face of the big athlete. He wondered why this fellow should have been given such stature with such wealth. He was ghastly rich, the snob, the useless cumberer of the ground!

All Gilfoyle's socialistic hostility to wealth and the wealthy came to the aid of his jealousy. To despoil the man was a duty. He had decoyed Anita from her duty by his millions. Not that she was unwilling to be decoyed. And now she would revel in her ill-got luxury, while her legal husband could starve in a garret.

As he brooded, the vision of Dyckman's money grew huger and huger. The dog had not merely thousands or hundreds of thousands, but thousands of thousands. Gilfoyle had never seen a thousand-dollar bill. Yet Dyckman, he had heard, was worth twenty millions.

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If he caught Dyckman and Anita together in a compromising situation, he could collect heavily under threat of exposure. Rather than be dragged into the newspapers and the open courts, Dyckman would pay almost any sum.

There was a law in New York against the violation of the seventh commandment, and the penitentiary was the punishment. The law had failed to catch its first victim, but it had been used in Massachusetts with success. The threat against Dyckman would surely work.

Then there was the recent Mann Law aimed at white-slavery but a more effective weapon for blackmailers. If Gilfoyle could catch Dyckman taking Anita motoring across the State line into New Jersey or Connecticut, he could arrest them or threaten them.

Also he could name Dyckman as correspondent in a divorce suit—or threaten to—and collect heavily that way. This was not blackmail in Gilfoyle's eyes. He scorned such a crime. This was honorable and necessary vindication of his offended dignity. There was probably never a practicer of blackmail who did not find a better word for the duress he applied.

Gilfoyle needed help. He had no cash to hire a detective with. But he knew a detective or two who might go into the thing with him on spec'.

Gilfoyle began to compose a scheme of poetic revenge. It should be his palinode to Anita. He would keep her under surveillance, but he would not let her know of his propinquity. A happy thought delighted him. To throw her off her guard, he wrote and sent a little note.

Dear Anita:

Since you evidently don't love me any longer, I will not bother you any more. I

am taking the train back to Chicago. Address me there care of General Delivery if you ever want to see me again.

YOUR ONCE LOVED HUSBAND.

He addressed it and gave it to the waitress to drop in the mail-box. That night he went hunting for his friend Corkery, the detective.

CHAPTER XLII

KEDZIE simmered in her own wrath a long while before she realized that she had let Gilfoyle escape. He was the very man she was looking for, and she had planned to go even to Chicago to find him.

He had stumbled into her trap, and she had driven him out. She ran to the window and stared up and down the street, but there was no trace of him. She had no idea where he could have gone. She wrung her hands and denounced herself for a fool.

She went to the hall to pick up the photograph of Jim Dyckman. Both halves of it were gone. Now she was frightened. Gilfoyle had departed meekly, but he had taken the picture; therefore he must have been filled with hate. He had revenge in his mind. And she trembled at her danger. He might strike at any time.

She suspected his exact intention. She dreaded to have Jim Dyckman call on her. She had a wild notion of asking him to take her away from New York—down to Atlantic City or up to the Berkshires—anywhere to be rid of Gilfoyle without being left alone. If she had done this, she would have done just what Gilfoyle wanted her to, and the Mann Act could have been wielded again as a blackjack.

Meanwhile Anita was afraid to have Dyckman come to her apartment as he constantly did. She telephoned to him that she would be busy at the studio all day. She would meet him at dinner somewhere. But afterward she would come home alone on one pretext or another. She carried out this plan—and spent a day of confused terror and anger.

Late that afternoon Gilfoyle's letter saying that he was on his way to Chicago

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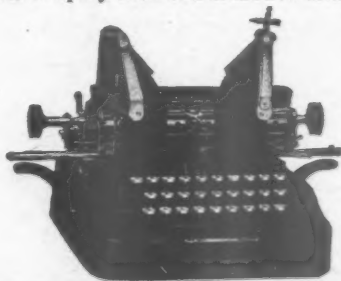
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gave her more delight than any other writing of his had ever given her. She need not skulk any more. Her problem was as far from solution as ever, but she wanted a respite from it, and she gave herself up to a few days of rapture. She was free from her work at the studio, and she was like a girl home from boarding-school on a vacation.

Dyckman found her charming in this mood. She made a child of him, and his years of dissatisfaction were forgotten. He romped through the festivals of New York like a cub.

There was no discussion of any date of marriage, and he was glad enough to let the matter drift. He did not want to marry Kedzie. He was satisfied to have her as a playmate. He was afraid to think of her as a wife, not only from fear of the public sensation it would make, but from fear of her in his home. Young men also know the timidities that are considered maidenly. He did not dream of Kedzie's reason for postponing always the matter of a wedding-date.

He had many notes from her, gushing, all adjectives and adverbs, capitalized and underscored. He left them about carelessly, or locked them up and left the key. If he had not done that, the lock on his desk was one that could be opened with a hairpin or a penknife, or with almost any key of a proper size.

There was no one to care except his valet. The valet cared and read and made notes. He was horrified at the thought of Dyckman's marrying a movie-actress. He would have preferred any intrigue to that disgrace. It would mean the loss of a good position, too; for while Dyckman was an easy boss, if he were going to be an easy marrier as well, his valet had too much self-respect to countenance a marriage beneath them. In such a case he would have to give notice.

If he could only have known of Gilfoyle's existence and his quests, how the two of them could have collaborated!

BUT the valet's interest in life woke anew when one evening as he was putting away the clothes Dyckman had thrown off, he searched his master's coat and found a letter from Mrs. Cheever.

Dear old Jim:

What's happen' you? I haven't seen you for ages. Couldn't you spare this evening to me? I'm alone—as always—and lonelier than usual. Do take pity on

Your devoted

CHARITY C.

That note, so lightly written in seeming, had been torn from a desperate heart and written in tears and blood.

Since she had learned that her husband really loved Zada and that she was going to mother him a child, Charity had been unable to adjust her soul to the new problem.

The Reverend Dr. Mosely had promised her advice, but the poor man could not adjust his advice to the situation. He did not believe in divorce, and yet he did not approve of illegal infants. How happy he could have been with either problem, with t'other away! In his dilemma he simply avoided Charity and turned his attention to the more regular chores of his parish.

Charity understood his silence, and it served to deepen her own perplexity. She was sure of only one thing: that she was caged and forgotten.

Cheever came home less and less, and he was evidently so harrowed with his own situation that Charity felt almost more sorry for him than angry at him. She imagined that he must be enduring no little from the whims and terrors of Zada. He was evidently afraid to speak to Charity. To ask for her mercy was contrary to all his nature. He never dreamed that the dictagraph had brought her with him when he learned of Zada's intensely interesting condition and her exceedingly onerous demands. He did not dare ask Charity for a divorce in order that he might legitimize this by-blow of his. He could imagine only that she would use the information for some ruinous vengeance. So he dallied with his fate in dismal irresolution.

Charity had his woes to bear as well as her own. She knew that she had lost him forever. The coquetties she had used to win him back were impossible even to attempt. He had no use for her forgiveness or her charms. He was a mere specter in her home, doomed for his sins to walk the night.

In despising herself she rendered herself lonelier. She had not even herself for companion. Her heart had always been eager with love and eager for it. The spirit that impelled her to endure hardships in order to expend her surplusage of love was unemployed now. She had feasted upon love, and now she starved.

Cheever had been a passionate courtier and, while he was interested, a fiery devotee. When he abandoned her, she suffered with the devastation that deserted wives and recent widows endure but must not speak of. It meant terribly much to Charity Coe to be left alone. It was dangerous to herself, her creeds, her ideals.

She began to be more afraid of being alone than of any other fear. She grew resentful toward the conventions that held her. She was like a tigress in a wicker cage, growing hungrier, lithier, more gracefully fierce.

She had lost much of her former beauty in her vigils and labors in the hospitals, and it had waned in her humiliations of Cheever's preference for another woman. Her jealous shame at being disprized and notoriously neglected had given her wanness and bitterness, instead of warmth and sweetness.

But now the wish to be loved brought back loveliness. She did not know how beautiful she was again. She thought that she wanted to see Jim Dyckman merely because she wanted to be flattered and because—as women say in such moods—men are so much more sensible than women. Often they mean more sensitive. Charity did not know that it was love, not friendship, that she required when at last she wrote to Jim Dyckman and begged him to call on her.

THE note struck him hard. It puzzled him by its tone. And he, remembering how vainly he had pursued her, forgot her disdain and recalled only how worthy of pursuit she was. He hated himself for his disloyalty to Anita in comparing his fiancée with Charity, and he cursed himself for finding Charity infinitely Anita's superior in every way. But he hated and cursed in vain.

Kedzie, or "Anita," as he called her, was an outsider, a pretty thing like a

geisha, fascinating by her oddity and her foreignness, but after all an alien who could interest one only temporarily. There was something transient about Kedzie in his heart, and he had felt it vaguely the moment he found himself pledged to her forever. But Charity—he had loved her from perambulator days. She was his tradition. His thoughts and desires had always come home to Charity.

Yet he was astonished at the sudden upheaval of his old passion. It shook off the new affair as a volcano burns away the weeds that have grown about its crater. He supposed that Charity wanted to take up the moving-picture scheme in earnest, and he repented the fact that he had gone to the studio for information and had come away with a flirtation.

One thing was certain; he must not fail to answer Charity's summons. He had an engagement with Kedzie, but he called her up and told her the politest lie he could concoct. Then he made himself ready and put on his festival attire to visit his first and last love.

CHAPTER XLIII

CHARITY had grown sick of having people say, "How pale you are!" "You've lost flesh, haven't you?" "Have you been ill, dear?"—those tactless observations that so many people feel it necessary to make, as if there were no mirrors or scales or symptoms for one's information and distress.

Annoyed by these conversational harrowers, Charity had finally gone to her dressmaker, Dutill, and asked him to save her from vegetation! He saw that she was a young woman in sore need of a compliment, and he flattered her lavishly. He did more for her improvement in five minutes than six doctors, seventeen clergymen and thirty financiers could have done. A compliment in time is a heart-stimulant with no acetanilid reaction. Also he told her how wonderful she had been in the past, recalling by name and make many a gown she had worn, as one would tell a great actress what rôles he had seen her in.

He clothed her with praise and en-



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couragement, threw a mantle of crimson velvet about her. And she crimsoned with pride, and her hard, thin lips velveted with beauty.

She responded so heartily that he was enabled to sell her a gown of very sumptuous mode, its colors laid on as with the long sweeps of a Sargent's brush. A good deal of flesh was not left to the imagination; as in a Sargent painting, the throat, shoulders and arms were part of the color-scheme. It was a gown to stride in, to stand still in, in an attitude of heroic repose, or to recline in with a Parthenonian grandeur.

This gown did not fit her perfectly, just as it came from Paris, but it revealed its possibilities and restored her shaken self-confidence immeasurably. If women—or their husbands—could afford it, they would find perhaps more consolation, restoration and exaltation at the dressmakers' than at—it would be impudent to say where.

By the time Charity's new gown was ready for the last fitting, Charity had lost her start, and when Dutilh went into the room where she had dressed, he was aghast at the difference. On the first day the gown had thrilled her to a collaboration with it. Now she hardly stood up in it. She drooped with exaggerated awkwardness, shrugged her shoulders with sarcasm and made a face of disgust.

Dutilh tried to mask his disappointment with anger. When Charity groaned: "Aren't we awful—this dress and I?" he retorted: "You are, but don't blame the gown. For God's sake, do something for the dress. It would do wonders for you if you would help it!" He believed in a golden rule for his wares: do for your clothes what you would have them do for you.

He threatened not to let Charity have the gown at all at any price. He ordered her to take it off. She refused. In the excitement of the battle, she grew more animated. Then he whirled her to a mirror and said:

"Look like that, and you're a made woman."

She was startled by the vivacity, the authority, she saw in her features so long dispirited. She caught the trick of the expression. And actors know that

one's expression can control one's moods almost as much as one's moods control one's expressions.

So she persuaded Dutilh to sell her the dress. When she got it, she did not know just when to wear it, for she was going out but rarely, and then she did not want to be conspicuous. She decided to make Jim Dyckman's call the occasion for the launching of the gown. His name came up long before she had put it on to be locked in for the evening.

When she thrust her arms forward like a diver and entered the gown by way of the fourth dimension, the maids cried out with pride. And her own maid, standing with her finger-tips scattered over her face, wept tears down to her knuckles. She welcomed the prodigal back to beauty.

"Oh, ma'am, but it's good to see you lookin' lovely again!"

WHILE she bent to the engagement of the hooks, Charity feasted on her reflection in the cheval-glass. She was afraid that she was a little too much dressed up and a little too much dressed down. In Dutilh's shop, with the models and the assistants about, she was but a lay figure, a clothes-horse. At the opera she would have been one of a thousand shoulder-showing women. For a descent upon one poor caller, and a former lover at that, the costume frightened her.

But it was too late to change, and she caught up a scarf of gossamer and twined it round her neck to serve as a mitigation.

Hearing her footsteps on the stairs at last, Dyckman hurried to meet her. As she swept into the room she collided with him, softly, fragrantly. He had his arms full of her before he could save himself, and while they both laughed nervously, they were both a little influenced.

She found the drawing-room too formal and led him into the library. She pointed him to a great chair and seated herself on the corner of a leather divan nearly as big as a touring-car. In the dark, hard frame she looked richer than ever. He could not help seeing how much more important she was than his Anita.

Anita was pretty and peachy, delicious, kissable, huggable, a pleasant armful, a lapload of girlish mischief. Charity was beautiful, noble, perilous, a woman to live for, fight for, die for. Kedzie was to Charity as *Rosalind* to *Isolde*.

It was time for Jim to play *Tristan* but he had no more blank verse in him than a polo score-card. Yet the simple marks on such a form stand for tremendous energy and the utmost thrill.

"Well, how are you anyway, Charity? How goes it with you?" he said. "Gee, but you look great to-night. What's the matter with you? You're stunning!"

Charity laughed uncannily:

"You're the only one that thinks so, Jim."

"I always did admire you more than anybody else could; but, good Lord, everybody must have eyes."

"I'm afraid so," said Charity, "but you're the only one that has imagination about me."

"Bosh!"

"My husband can't see me at all."

"Oh, him!" Jim growled. "What's he up to now?"

"I don't know," said Charity. "I hardly ever see him. He's chucked me for good."

JIM studied her with idolatry and with the intolerant ferocity of a priest for the indifferent or the skeptical. The idol made her plaint to her solitary worshiper.

"I'm horribly lonely, Jim. I don't go anywhere, meet anybody, do anything but mope. Nobody comes to see me or take me out. Even you kept away from me till I had to send for you."

"You ordered me off the premises in Newport, if you remember."

"Yes, I did, but I didn't realize that I was mistreating the only admirer I had."

This was rather startling in its possible implications. It scared Dyckman. He gazed at her until her eyes met his. There was something in them that made him look away. Then he heard the gasp of a little sob, and she began to cry.

"Why, Charity!" he said. "Why, Charity Coe!"

She smiled at the pet name and the tenderness in his voice, and her tears stopped.

"Jim," she said, "I told Dr. Mosely all about my affairs, and I simply spoiled his day for him and he dropped me. So I think I'll tell you."

"Go to the other extreme, eh?" said Jim.

"Yes, I'm between the devil and the high church. I've no doubt I'm to blame, but I can't seem to stand the punishment with no change in sight. I've tried to, but I've got to the end of my string and—well—whether you can help me or not—I've got to talk or die. Do you mind if I run on?"

"God bless you, I'd be tickled to death."

"It will probably only ruin your evening."

"Help yourself. I'd rather have you wreck all my evenings than—than—"

He had begun well, which was more than usual. She did not expect him to finish. She thanked him with a look of more than gratitude.

"Jim," she said, "I've found out that my husband is—well—there's a certain ex-dancer named L'Etoile, and he—she—they—"

Instead of being astounded, Dyckman was glum.

"Oh, you've found that out at last, have you? Maybe you'll learn before long that there's a war in Europe. But of course you know that. You were over there. Why, before you came back, he was dragging that animal around with him. I saw him with her."

"You knew it as long ago as that?"

"Everybody knew it."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I'm a low-lived coward, I suppose. I tried to a dozen times, but somehow I couldn't. By gad, I came near writing you an anonymous letter. I couldn't seem to stoop to that, though, and I couldn't seem to rise to telling you out and out. And now that you know, what are you going to do about it?"

"That's what I don't know. Dr. Mosely wanted me to try to get him back."

"Dr. Mosely's got softening of the brain. To think of your trying to per-

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sua de a man to live with you! You of all people, and him of all people! Agh! If you got him, what would you have? And how long would you keep him? You can't make a household pet out of a— a laughing hyena. Chuck him, I say."

"But that means the divorce-court, Jim."

"What of it? It's cleaner and sweeter than this arrangement."

"But the newspapers."

"Ah, what do you care about them? They'd only publish what everybody that knows you knows already. And what's the diff' if a lot of strangers find out that you're too decent to tolerate that man's behavior? Look at what they say about the President, and he gets along somehow. A lot of good people oppose divorce, but I was reading that the best people used to oppose anesthetics and education and republics. It's absolutely no argument against a thing to say that a lot of the best people think it is outrageous. They've always fought everything, especially freedom for the women. They said it was dangerous for you to select your husbands, or manage your property or learn to read or go out to work or vote or be in a profession—or even be a war-nurse. The hatred of divorce is all of a piece with the same old habit good people have of trying to mind other people's business for 'em."

"But Dr. Mosely says that marriage is a sacrament."

"Well, if a marriage like yours is a sacrament, give me a nice, decent white-slave market."

"That's the way it seems to me, but the church, especially our church, is so ferocious. Dr. Mosely preached a sermon against divorce and remarriage, and it was frightful what he said about women who change husbands. I'm afraid of it, Jim. I can't face the abuse and the newspapers, and I can't face the loneliness either. I'm desperately lonely."

"For him?" Jim groaned.

"No, I've got over loving him. I'll never endure him again, especially now that she has a better right to him."

SHE could not bring herself at first to tell him what she knew of Zada, but at length she confessed that she had

listened to the dictagraph and had heard that Zada was to be a mother. Dyckman was dumfounded; then he snarled:

"Thank God it's not you that's going to be—for him! Well, don't you call that divorce enough? How can you call your marriage a sacrament when he has gone and made a real sacrament with another woman? It takes two to keep a sacrament, doesn't it? or does it? I don't think I know what a sacrament is. But I tell you, there was never a plainer duty in the world. Turn him over to his Zada. She's the worst woman in town, and she's too good for him, at that. My Lord, how can you hesitate? How long can you stand it?"

"I don't know. I'm ready to die now. I'd rather die. I'd better die."

And once more she was weeping, now merely a lonely little girl. He could not resist the impulse to go to her side. He dropped down by her and patted her wrist gawkily. She caught his hand and clenched it with strange power. He could tell by her throat that her heart was leaping like a wild bird against a cage.

His own heart beat about his breast like a bird that has been set frantic by another bird, and his soul ached for her. He yearned to put his long arm about her and hold her tight, but he could not.

He had never seen her so. He could not understand what it was that made a darkling mist of her eyes and gave her parted lips such an impatient ecstasy of pain.

Suddenly, with an intuition unusual to him, he understood. He shrank from her, but not with contempt or blame. There was something divine about his merciful comprehension, but his only human response was a most ungodly wrath. He got to his feet, muttering:

"I ought to kill him. Maybe I will. I've got to beat him within an inch of his life."

Charity was dazed by his abrupt revolt.

"What do you mean, Jim? Who is it you want to beat?"

He laughed, a bloodthirsty laugh. "I'll find him!"

He rushed out into the hall, caught



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up his hat and coat and was gone. Charity was bewildered out of her wits. She could not imagine what had maddened him. She only knew that Dyckman also had abandoned her. He would find Cheever and fight him as one stag another. And the only result would be the death of one or both and a far more odious disgrace than the scandal she had determined to avoid.

CHAPTER XLII

DYCKMAN was at least half mad, and half inspired. Charity had been his lifelong religion. He had thought of her with ardor, but also with a kind of awe. He had wanted to be her husband. Failing to win her, he had been horrified to see that Cheever, possessing her, was still not satisfied.

He had never dreamed what this neglect might mean to her. He had not thought of her as mere woman after all, with more than pride to satisfy, with more than a mind to suffer. When the realization overwhelmed him, her nobility was not diminished in his eyes, but to all her former qualities was added the human element. She was flesh and blood, and a martyr in the flames. And the ingrate who had the godlike privilege of her embrace abandoned her for a public creature.

Dyckman felt himself summoned to avenge her.

It happened that he found the Cheever limousine waiting outside. He said to the chauffeur:

"Where does Miss Zada L'Etoile live?"

The chauffeur was startled. He answered with a touch of raillery:

"Search me, sir. How should I know?"

"I want none of your back-talk," said Dyckman, ready to maul the chauffeur or anybody for practice. He took out his pocketbook and lifted the first bill he came to. It was a yellow boy. He repeated:

"Where does Zada L'Etoile live?"

The chauffeur told him and got the bill. It was better than the poke in the eye he could have had instead. Dyckman

had sent his own car home. He had difficulty in finding a taxicab on Fifth Avenue along there. At length he stopped one and named the apartment-house where Zada lived.

THE hallboy was startled by his manner, amazed to hear the famous Dyckman ask for Miss L'Etoile. He telephoned the name while Dyckman fumed. After some delay he was told to come up.

Zada was alone—at least Cheever was not there. She had been astounded when Dyckman's name came through the telephone. Her first thought had been that Cheever had met with an accident and that Dyckman was bringing the news. She had given up the hope of involving Dyckman with Mrs. Cheever, after wasting Cheever's money on vain detectives.

When Dyckman was ushered in, she greeted him from her divan.

"Pardon my negligence," she said. "I'm not very well."

He saw at a glance that the dictagraph had told the truth. She was entirely too well. He felt his wrath at Zada vanishing. But this also he transferred to Cheever's account. He spoke as quietly as he could, though his face revealed his excitement.

"Sorry to trouble you, but I had hoped to find Mr. Cheever here."

"Mr. Cheever?! Here?!" Zada exclaimed with that mixture of the interrogation- and exclamation-points for which we have no symbol. She tried to look surprised at the unimaginable suggestion of Cheever's being in her environs. She succeeded as well as Dyckman did in pretending that his errand was trivial.

"Er—yes, I imagined you might happen to know where I could find him. I have a little business with him."

Zada thought to crush him with a condescension—a manicurial sarcasm:

"Have you been to the gentleman's home?"

Dyckman laughed: "Yes, but he wasn't there. He isn't there much nowadays—they say."

"Oh, do they?" Zada sneered. "Well, did they tell you he would be here?"

"No, but I thought—"

"Better try his office in the morning."

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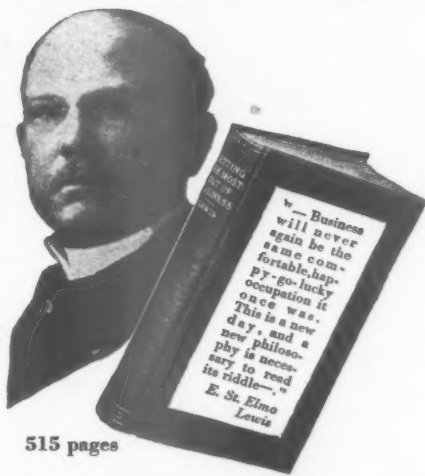
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"Thanks. I can't wait. What club does he affect most now?"

"Ask They," said Zada, ending the interview with a labored yawn. But when Dyckman bowed and turned to go, her curiosity bested her indignation.

"In case I should by any chance see him, could I give him your message?"

Dyckman laughed a sort of pugilistic laugh, and his self-conscious fist asserted itself.

"No, thanks, I'm afraid you couldn't. Good-by."

Zada saw his big fingers gathering—convening, as it were, into a fist, like a mace, and she was terrified for her man. She scrambled to her feet and caught Dyckman in the hall.

"What are you going to do to Mr. Cheever?"

Dyckman answered in the ironic slang:

"I'm not going to do a thing to him."

Zada's terror increased.

"What harm has he ever done to you?"

"I didn't say he had done me any harm."

"Is it because of his wife?"

"Leave her out of it."

There was the old phrase again. Cheever kept hurling it at her whenever she referred to the third corner of the triangle.

Zada remembered when Cheever had gone out after Dyckman to kill him if he found him. He had carried a revolver. Now he would be unarmed. He was not so big a man as Dyckman. She could see him being throttled slowly to death, leaving her and her child-to-be unprotected in their shameful folly.

"For God's sake, don't!" she implored him. "I'm not well. I mustn't have any excitement. I beg you—for my sake—"

"For your sake," said Dyckman with a scorn that changed to pity as she clung to him, "—for your sake, I'll give him a couple of extra jolts."

That was rather dazzling, the compliment of having Jim Dyckman as her champion! Her old habit of taking everybody's flattery made her forget for the moment that she was now a one-man woman. Her clutch relaxed under the compliment just long enough for Dyckman to escape without violence. He

darted through the door and closed it behind him.

She tugged at the inside knob, but he was so long that he could hold the outside knob with one hand and reach the elevator-bell with the other.

When the car came up, he released the knob and lifted his hat with a pleasant "Good night." She dared not pursue him in the garb she wore.

SHE returned despondent to her room.

Then she ran to the telephone to pursue Cheever and warn him. They had quarreled at the dinner-table. He had left her on the ground that it was dangerous for her to be excited as he evidently excited her. It is one of the most craven shifts of a man for ending an endless wrangle with a woman.

Zada tried three clubs before she found Cheever. When she heard his voice at last, she was enraptured. She tried to entice him into her own shelter.

"I'm sorry I was so mean. Come on home and make peace with me."

"All right, dear, I will."

"Right away?"

"After a while, darling. I'm sitting in a little game of poker."

"You'd better not keep me waiting!" she warned. The note was an unfortunate reminder of his bondage. It rattled his shackles. He could not even have a few hours with old cronies at the club. She was worse than Charity had ever dreamed of being. She heard the resentment in his answer and felt that he would stay away from her for discipline. She threw aside diplomacy and tried to frighten him home.

"Jim Dyckman is looking for you."

"Dyckman? Me! Why?"

"He wants to beat you up."

Cheever laughed outright at this.

"You're crazy, darling. What has Dyckman got against me?"

"I don't know, but I know he's hunting you."

"I haven't laid eyes on him for weeks. We've had no quarrel."

Zada was frantic. She howled across the wire.

"Come home, I beg and implore you. He'll hurt you—he may kill you."

Again Cheever laughed: "You're hav-

ing hallucinations, my love. You'll feel better in the morning. Where the deuce did you get such a foolish notion, anyway?"

"From Jim Dyckman," she stormed. "He was here looking for you. If anybody's going crazy, he's the one. I had a struggle with him. He broke away. I begged him not to harm you, but he said he'd give you a few extra jolts for my sake. Please, please, don't let him find you there."

Cheever was half convinced and quite puzzled. He knew that Dyckman had never forgiven him for marrying Charity. The feud had smoldered. He could not conceive what should have revived it, unless Charity had been talking. He had not thought of anyone's punishing him for neglecting her. But if Dyckman had enlisted in her cause—well, Cheever was afraid of hardly anything in the world except boredom, and the appearance of fear. He answered Zada with a gruff:

"Let him find me, if he wants to. Or since you know him so well, tell me where he'll be, and I'll go find him."

He could hear Zada's strangled moan. How many times, since male and female began, have women made wild, vain protests against the battle-habit, the duel-tribunal? Mothers, daughters, wives, mistresses, they have been seldom heard and have been forced to wait remote in anguish till their man has come back or been brought back, victorious or baffled, or defeated, maimed, wounded or dead.

It meant everything to Zada that her mate should not suffer either death or publicity. But chiefly her love of him made outcry now. She could not endure the vision of her beloved receiving the hammering of the giant Dyckman.

The telephone crackled under the load of her prayers, but Cheever had only one answer:

"If you want me to run away from him or anybody, you don't get your wish, my darling."

Finally she shrieked: "If you don't come home, I'll come there and get you."

"Ladies are not allowed in the main part of this club, dearest," said Cheever.

"Thank God, there are a few places where two men can settle their affairs without the help of womanly intuition."

"He wants to pound you to death," she screamed. "If you don't promise me, I'll come there and break in if I have to scratch the eyes out of the door-keeper."

He knew that she was capable of doing this very thing; so he made answer:

"All right, my dear, I surrender."

"You'll come home?"

"Yes, indeed. Right away."

"Oh, thank God. You do love me, then. How soon will you be here?"

"Very shortly, unless the taxi breaks down."

"Hurry!"

"Surely. Good-by!"

He hung up the reverberant receiver and said to the telephone-boy.

"If anybody calls me, I've gone out. No matter who calls me, I'm out."

"Yes sir."

Then he went to the card-room, found that the game had gone on without him, cashed in his chips and excused himself. He was neither winning nor losing, so that he could not be accused of "cold feet." That was one of the most intolerable accusations to him. He could violate any of the commandments, but in the sportsman's decalogue "Thou shalt not have cold feet" was one that he honored in the observance, not the breach.

He went down to the reading-room, a palatial hall fifty yards long with a table nearly as big as a railroad platform, on a tremendous rug as wide and deep as a lawn. About it were chairs and divans that would have satisfied a lotus-eater.

Cheever avoided proffers of conversation and pretended to read the magazines and newspapers. He kept his eyes on the doors. He did not want to take anyone into his confidence, as he felt that after all Zada might have been out of her head. He did not want any seconds or bottle-holders. He was not afraid. Still, he did not care to be surprised by a mad bull. He felt that he could play toreador with neatness and

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dispatch, provided he could foresee the charge.

AMONG the magazines Cheever glanced at was one with an article on various modes of self-defense, jiu-jitsu and other devices by which any clever child could apparently remove or disable a mad elephant. But Cheever's traditions did not incline to such methods. He had the fisting habit. He did not feel called toward clinching or choking, twisting, tripping, knifing, swording or sand-bagging. His wrath expressed itself, and gayly, in the play of the triceps muscle. For mobility he used footwork and headwork. For shield he had his forearms or his open hands—for weapons, the ten knuckles at the other end of the exquisite driving-shafts beginning in his shoulder-blades.

He had been a clever fighter from childhood. He had been a successful boxer and had followed the art in its professional and amateur developments. He knew more of prize-ring history and politics than of any other. He often regretted that his inherited money had robbed him of a career as a heavy-weight. He was not so big as Dyckman, but he had made fools of bigger men. He felt that the odds were a trifle in his favor, especially if Dyckman were angry, as he must be to go roaring about town frightening one silly woman for another's sake.

He would have preferred not to fight in the club. It was the best of all possible clubs, and he supposed that he would be expelled for profaning its sacrosanctity with a vulgar brawl. But anything was better than cold feet.

Finally his hundredth glance at the door revealed Jim Dyckman. He was a long way off, but he looked bigger than Cheever remembered him. Also he was calmer than Cheever had hoped him to be, and not drunk, as he half expected.

Dyckman caught sight of Cheever, glared a moment, tossed his head as if it had antlers on it and came forward grimly and swiftly.

A few members of the club spoke to him. An attendant or two, carrying cocktails or highballs in or empty glasses out, stepped aside.

DYCKMAN advanced down the room, and his manner was challenge enough. But he paused honorably to say:

"Cheever, I'm looking for you."

"So I hear."

"You had fair warning, then, from your—woman?"

"Which one?" said Cheever with his irresistible impudence. That was the fulminate that exploded Dyckman's wrath.

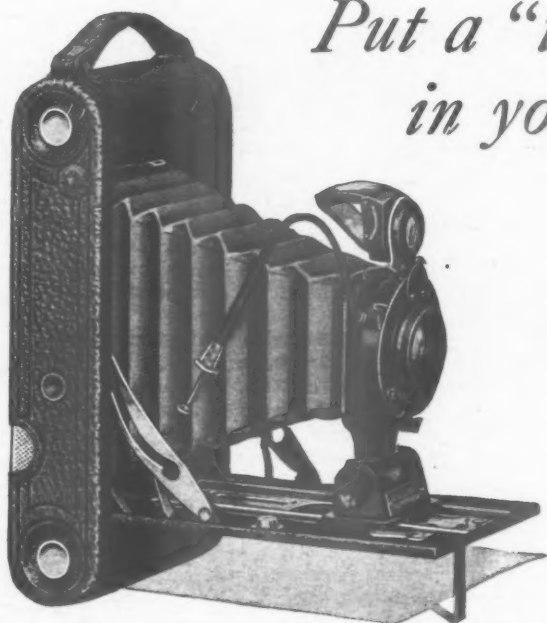
"You blackguard!" he roared, and plunged. His left hand was out and open, his great right fist back. As he closed, it flashed past him and drove into the spot where Cheever's face was smirking.

But the face was gone. Cheever had bent his neck just enough to escape the fist. He met the weight of Dyckman's rush with all his own weight in a short-arm jab that rocked Dyckman's whole frame and crumpled the white cuirass of his shirt.

The fight was within an ace of being ended then and there, but Dyckman's belly was covered with sinew, and he digested the bitter medicine. He tried to turn his huge grunt into a laugh. He was at least not to be guilty of assaulting a weakling.

Dyckman was a bit of a boxer too. Like most rich men's sons, he was practiced in athletics. The gentleman of our day carries no sword and no revolver; he carries his weapons in his gloves.

Dyckman acknowledged Cheever's skill and courage by deploying and falling back. He sparred a moment. He saw that Cheever was quicker than he at the feint and the sidestep. He grew impatient at this dancing duet. His wrath was his worst enemy and Cheever's ally. Cheever taunted him, and he heard the voices of the club-members who were rushing from their chairs in consternation, and running in from the other rooms, summoned by the wireless excitement that announces fights. There was not going to be time for a bout, and the gallery was bigger than Dyckman had expected. He went in hell-for-leather. He felt a mighty satisfaction when his good left hand slashed through Cheever's ineffectual palms, reached that



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perky little mustache and smeared that amiable mouth with blood.

IN the counterblow the edge of Cheever's cuff caught on Dyckman's knuckles and ripped the skin. This saved Dyckman's eye from mourning. And now wherever he struck, he left a red mark. It helped his target-practice.

Cheever gave up trying to mar Dyckman's face and went for his waistcoat. All is fair in such a war, and below the belt was his favorite territory. He hoped to put Dyckman out. Dyckman tried to withhold his vulnerable solar plexus by crouching, but Cheever kept whizzing through his guard like a blazing pin-wheel even when it brought his jaw in reach of an uppercut.

Dyckman clinched and tried to bear him down, but Cheever reaching round him battered him with the terrific kidney-blow, and Dyckman flung him off.

And now servants came leaping into the fray, venturing to lay hands on the men. They could hear older members pleading: "Gentlemen! Gentlemen! for God's sake, remember where you are." One or two went calling "House Committee!"

Such blows as were struck now were struck across other heads and in spite of other arms. Both men were seized at length and dragged away, petted and talked to like infuriated stallions. They stood panting and bleeding, trying not to hear the voices of reason. They glared at each other, and it became unendurable to each that the other should be able to stand erect and mock him.

As if by a signal agreed on, they wrenched and flung aside their captors and dashed together again, forgetting science, defense, caution, everything but the lust of carnage. Dyckman in freeing himself left his coat in the grasp of his retainers.

There is nothing more sickeningly thrilling than the bare-handed ferocity of two big men, all hate and stupid power, smashing and being smashed, trying to defend and destroy and each longing to knock the other lifeless before his own heart is stopped. It seemed a pity to interrupt it, and it was perilous as well.

FOR a long moment the two men flailed each other, bored in and staggered out.

It was thud and thwack, slash and gouge. Wild blows went through the air like broadswords, making the spectators groan at what they might have done had they landed. Blows landed and sent a head back with such a snap that one looked for it on the floor. Flesh split, and blood spurted. Cheever reached up and swept his nose and mouth clear of gore—then shot his reeking fist into Dyckman's heart as if he would drive it through.

It was amazing to see Dyckman's answering swinge batter Cheever forward to one knee. Habit and not courtesy kept Dyckman from jumping him. He stood off for Cheever to regain his feet. It was not necessary, for Cheever's agility had carried him out of range, but the tolerance maddened him more than anything yet, and he ceased to duck and dodge. He stood in and battered at Dyckman's stomach till a gray nausea began to weaken his enemy. Dyckman grew afraid of a sudden blotting out of consciousness. He had known it once when the chance blow of an instructor had stretched him flat for thirty seconds.

He could not keep Cheever off far enough to use his longer reach. He forgot everything but the determination to make ruins of that handsome face before he went out. He knocked loose one tooth and bleared an eye, but it was not enough. Finally Cheever got to him with a sledge-hammer smash in the groin. It hurled Dyckman against and along the big table, just as he put home one magnificent, majestic, mellifluous swinge with all his body in it. It planted an earthquake under Cheever's ear.

Dyckman saw him go backward across a chair and spinning over it and with it and under it to the floor. Then he had only the faintness and the vomiting to fight. He made one groping, clutching, almighty effort to stand up long enough to crow like a victorious fighting cock, and he did. He stood up. He held to the table; he did not drop. And he said one triumphant,

"Humph!"

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And now the storm of indignation began. Dyckman was a spent and bankrupt object, and anybody could berate him. A member of the house committee reviled him with profanity and took the names of witnesses who could testify that Dyckman struck the first blow.

The pitiful stillness of Cheever, where a few men knelt about him, turned the favor to him. One little whiffet told Dyckman to his face that it was a dastardly thing he had done. He laughed. He had his enemy on the floor. He did not want everything.

Dyckman made no answer to the accusations. He did not say that he was a crusader punishing an infidel for his treachery to a poor neglected woman. He had almost forgotten what he was fighting for. He was too weak even to oppose the vague advice he heard that Cheever should be taken "home." He had a sardonic impulse to give Zada's address, but he could not master his befuddled wits enough for speech.

The little fussy rooster who called Dyckman dastardly said that he ought to be arrested. The reception he got for his proposal to bring a policeman into the club or take a member out of it into the jail and the newspapers was almost annihilating. The chairman of the house committee said:

"I trust that it is not necessary to say that this wretched and most unheard-of affair must be kept—unheard-of. But I may say that I have here a list of the members present, and I shall make a list of the club-servants present. If one word of this leaks out, each gentleman present will be brought before the council, and every servant will be discharged immediately—every servant without regard to guilt, innocence or time of service."

DYCKMAN would have liked to spend the night at the club, but its hospitable air had chilled. He sent for his big coat, turned up the collar, pulled his hat low and crept into a taxicab. His father and mother were out, and he got

to his room without explanations. His valet gasped at the sight of him, but Dyckman laughed:

"You ought to see the other fellow."

Then he crept into the tub, thence into his bed, and slept till he was called to the telephone the next morning by Mrs. Cheever.

As he might have expected, Charity was as far as possible from gratitude. The only good news she gave him was that Cheever had been brought home half dead, terribly mauled, broken in pride and weeping like a baby with his shame. Dyckman could not help swelling a little at that.

But when Charity told him that Cheever accused her of setting him on and swore that he would get even with them both, Dyckman realized that fists are poor poultices for bruises, and revenge the worst of all solutions. Charity denounced him and begged him once more to keep out of her sight and out of her life.

Dyckman was in the depths of the blues, and a note to the effect that he had been suspended from his club to await action looking toward his expulsion left him quite alone in the world.

In such a mood Kedzie Thropp called him up, with a cheery hail that rejoiced him like the first cheep of the first robin after a miserable winter. He said that he would call that evening, with the greatest possible delight. She said that she was very lonely for him, and they should have a blissful evening with just themselves together.

But it proved to be a rather crowded occasion in Kedzie's apartment. Her father and mother reached there before Dyckman did, to Kedzie's horror—and theirs. And when Dyckman arrived he did not know that Kedzie's husband Tommy Gilfoyle and his friend Corkery the detective were lurking outside, ready at last to make their invasion.

All of these people met under Kedzie's roof, and it was written that one other unexpected guest should keep the tryst—Death.

The story of these meetings comes in the next installment, in the May issue, on the news-stands April 23rd.



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